Managing Teaching and Learning for Curriculum Change Implementation in Colleges of Education: A Case of David Livingstone College of Education, Zambia.

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Abstract: The aim of the study focused on the implementation of curriculum change in teacher education in Zambia. The question underpinning this study was as follows: To what extent has the newly revised and implemented curriculum in colleges of education served the intended purpose? Questionnaires and interviews were used as data collection methods using mixed methods. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. Findings revealed that although curriculum change was a necessity, it needed not to be rushed owing to the process complexity and the fact that it needed adequate involvement of all critical stakeholders. The study also established that lack of teaching and learning materials impacted negatively on the implementation of the new curriculum and that these changes have affected the lecturers' way of teaching and delivery of subject content due to lack of experience and exposure in the new curriculum pedagogies / methodologies. The key recommendation of the study was that the new curriculum implementation process must be piloted and provide teaching and learning materials before it is rolled out throughout the country coupled with effective engagement and involvement of critical stakeholders in order to guarantee its success.

Keywords: Curriculum change, implementation, managing, teaching, teacher education.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

According to Amimo *et al* (2014) a comprehensive understanding of the concept of curriculum change is only possible after understanding what a curriculum is. Glatthorn (1987, pp. 1) defines curriculum as *"the plans made for guiding learning in schools, usually represented in retrievable documents of several levels of generality, and the implementations of those plans in the classroom; those experiences take place in a learning environment that also influences what is learnt"*. Educational or curriculum change entails many challenges. Some involve achieving educational change; others concern understanding educational change. Achieving educational change calls for action. Images arise of visionary and dedicated teachers, principals, superintendents, parents, and policy makers working above and beyond the call of duty to improve learning for young people. Understanding educational change calls for analysis and reflection. It is thought that researchers and evaluators collecting and interpreting data, testing theories, and patiently trying to account for successful and unsuccessful reforms (Wong, 2009).

On the other hand, teachers are significant factors in any educational system anywhere in the world (Manchishi, 2013). As such, teacher educators have a huge responsibility in supporting the future development of teachers through effective curriculum change and management. The reasons for supporting teachers is that teaching is a demanding and complex task (Crosby & Harden, 2000). The quality and effectiveness of an education system depend heavily on the quality of its teachers. They are the key persons in determining success in meeting the system's goals (Ministry of Education, 1996). Yet as expressed by Livingstone (2016) teacher education is trapped in the winds of change of school curriculum, examination systems, and educational policies. Instead of helping to prepare pre-service teachers to understand topics such as theories and research about child development and learning, how to learn from experience, how to engage in quantitative and qualitative research and complex

problem solving (Leavitt, 1992), teacher education institutions seem to be reacting to these changes and challenges for their place in the change process (Livingstone 2016). In the Zambian, education system today for example, there has been an emphasis by the government on the life skills through the launch of the new school curriculum from early childhood education to teacher education training through the theme 'Empowering learners by putting Theory into practice' (Ministry of Education, 2014). The emphasis on practice rather than theory was the goal of the 1977 Educational Reforms. However, several studies have shown that the transfer of theory to practice is meager or even non-existent (Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998). Nevertheless; the 1977 Reforms on teacher education pointed out that:

> *"the training programs should lay stress on developing the teacher's personality, right attitude and responsibility….in short, teacher education should prepare the trainee teacher for the task of guiding children, youth and adults in the pursuit of knowledge to become useful and self-reliant citizens* (Ministry of Education, 1977).

The Reforms, according to the above quotation saw the role of a teacher in helping other people and the need for productive work by all individuals in the education sector.

1.1. Background to Curriculum Change in Zambia

Teacher education has gone through several curriculum changes. Kalimaposo (2010) points out that the first innovation in the curriculum for pre-service teacher education after independence was the introduction of the Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) in 1967. Chishimba (1979) in Kalimaposo (2010) goes on to say the Zambia Primary Course was an experimental programme created on the New Peak Course an English Medium Programme that was in use that time in Kenya. This was followed by the Zambia Basic Education Course (ZBEC) which was influenced by the 1977 Educational Reforms in which teacher education had to play the role of economic and social change in independent Zambia. In 1997, the Ministry of Education developed a teacher training programme known as Field-based Teacher Training Approach (FIBATTA). The goal of the programme was to address the shortage of teachers (Manchishi, 2004). The Programme had a short span of operational time and was transformed into what was called the Zambia Teacher Education Reform Programme (ZATERP). In 1997, the Ministry of Education with the help of DANIDA started the Zambia Teacher Education Reform Programme (ZATERP) as a pilot in the following three primary teacher training colleges, namely; Kitwe, Solwezi, and Mufulira (Manchishi, 2004). ZATERP spread to all primary teacher colleges in 2000. The programme name was then changed to Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC) which was delivered using a two-year training course.

In the review of teacher education strategy, according to the World Bank (2006), the Ministry of Education began a process of re-examining its teacher education strategy assisted by a consultancy in July 2005. In the strategic plan, 2003-07 Ministry of Education indicated that the duration of pre-service teacher training would be extended to three years (World Bank, 2006). In 2010, the Ministry of Education began plans of transforming the two-year certificate programme in primary colleges of education to a three-year diploma programme and to affiliate all primary colleges of education to the University of Zambia (Kalimaposo, 2010).

1.2. Problem Statement

There is anecdotal indication to the effect that the newly revised and implemented pre-service junior teacher education curriculum in Zambia's colleges of education involved top-down approach with only a few selected individuals from from Ministry of Education Headquarters being the main pioneers of the whole process to the total exclusion of the other key and critical stakeholders. This is indicted to have impacted negatively on teaching/learning pedagogy by implementing institutions. Literature evidence stresses adequate reservations to prospects of curriculum change and implementation breakthrough if anchored on top-down models (Brady et al. 2007).

1.3. Study Objectives

- To establish the capacity to support and monitor curriculum change and implementation in the new curriculum

- To ascertain the necessity of a new curriculum
- To determine the nature of implementation challenges of a new curriculum

2.0. THEORETICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Models to Curriculum Change

There are broadly two models to curriculum change and development, top-down and bottom-up. Top-down approaches to curriculum change usually refer to innovations that have been developed by an expert group or centralized body outside the school with the expectation that the school would adopt the change (Morris, 1995). Such an approach gives a tight package of direct link to objectives, content and assessment (Macdonald, 2007). The role of the teacher therefore is passive with no input if any in the development of the curriculum. The role of this approach is to achieve high levels of congruence in planning and implementation of the curriculum as it is implemented by teachers in the field and then evaluated (Elmore, 2007; Fullan 1993; Smith & Lovat, 2003).

The success of curriculum changes in the top-down approach is usually seen on the extent to which the curriculum has been adopted with minimum deviation (Buchanan, 2007; Macdonald, 2007). The main goal of this approach is to maintain control and efficiency through power or coercive strategies (Smith & Lovat, 2003). In this approach failure to deal with different teacher concerns and the exclusion of teachers within the change process mostly contributes towards the failure of large scale change (Cheng, 2007). The top-down approach to curriculum development and implementation is rarely successful, with teachers tending to adapt the curriculum rather than adopting it (Brady & Kennedy, 2007). Policy makers also lack understanding about implementation as a phase within the change process and how to influence teaching practice (Elmore, 2007; Fullan, 1993).

Top-down administrators determine the curriculum for teachers (McNeil, 1990). For example, curriculum development in almost all Arab countries, El-Okda (2005) follows a top-down model in which teacher involvement is confined to the implementation of pre-designed packages of teaching materials. It is the view of the author that the new curriculum being implemented in junior pre-service teacher education is initiated and controlled by selected experts at the Ministry of General Education. What has been seen is that the top-down model is being used to implement curriculum changes through fact finding, brainstorming, pooling of ideas and teaching staff involvement and familiarization of what is going on. Nevertheless, the use of the top-down model in implementing curriculum changes in junior pre-service education in Zambia seems to be a raid aimed at ending one educational programme over time in preference for another.

Galton (1998) reminds us that there is substantial proof to suggest that top-down methods of curriculum development often fail to result in the changes in practice which are deemed necessary by the curriculum developers. Sarason (1990) attributes this failure to the fact that: timelines are generally unrealistic because policy-makers want immediate results and that structural solutions, such as increasing assessment and testing, are often preferred although these do not get at the underlying problems of classroom teaching and teacher development. Sarason (1990) further argues that often times support systems for implementing policy initiatives are either not provided or are inadequate.

The bottom-up approach contrasts with the top-down approach where curriculum change takes place in individual schools. In this approach to curriculum change local factors are taken into consideration. It gives control of curriculum development to teachers who are deemed the real experts. The bottom-up approach to curriculum change is limited in its effectiveness because there is low fidelity to innovation. The approach fails to take into account that human beings tend to act out of their own self-interest and the subjective meaning they make out of life (Healy, 2011). Healy goes on to say sometimes curriculum decisions made solely at the grassroots level results in poor decisions. There is a high possibility of inactivity as innovations can be rejected (Healy, 2011).

As for the bottom-up model El-Okda (2005) points out that in several parts of the globe such as the United States of America,

Britain and other European and South Asia countries many attempts have been made to develop curriculum using bottom-up models. However, Sarason (1990) echoes that:

> *"the weakness of the bottom-up approach is that many times the problems facing schools are themselves very complex and time-consuming and the efforts demanded in the search for a satisfactory solution not only fail to motivate some teachers but alienate others from participating in further reforms."*

One basic reason for alienation of others is that some administrators believe curriculum should be revised only by those who teach it (Healy, 2011). The alternative to the above discussed models is an attempt at the partnership model.

2.2. Implementation of Education Change

Fullan (2001) characterizes the implementation dip as a literal drop in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and new understanding. The implementation dip reflects the feeling of uneasiness with the new programmes or practices that will stall reform. Whitaker (1998) suggests four barriers to reform which include staff development, communication, lack of leadership and fragmentation. Duke (2004) argues that for successful implementation of change, there should be good leadership, continuous staff development, talent diversity, a collaborative culture, flexibility and stability. Since the 1990s, the study of change focus more on making change a success from the various perspectives of leadership, teachers' commitment and school culture.

2.3. Teacher / Educator Levels of Knowledge and Exposure for Managing Curriculum Change

Teacher competence for curriculum change and management is of utmost significance. For instance, the teacher training system in the Russian Federation as part of the international educational space is undergoing continuous change, modernization, and reform (Sabirova, 2015) to meet current demand. In order to ensure the professional development of teachers, emphasis on reforms has been placed on the school as the primary unit of change. In the circumstance of the intensification strategic condition, intervention in teacher training is celebrated (Sabirova, 2015). Novikov (2000) and Belyakov (2007) note that this is "viewed in standardization, restructuring of knowledge, setting the new challenges, focusing on the competence as result and the resource necessary to meet the challenge". Today, the generation of new teacher training models takes place at the junction of controversial areas of unification and diversification" (Sabirova, 2015). Besides, Brazhnik (2002) notes that more than ever the dilemma of the interrelation of national, regional and global programs are becoming crucial for the training of future teachers.

The curriculum for educating teachers has been under discussion in Tanzania since the 1970s (Meena, 2009). Focus on curriculum innovation in teacher education has been seen to focus on methods of assessment, curriculum content, teaching, and learning. Researchers such as Babyegeya (2006), Osaki (2000) and Wort and Sumra (2001) assert that teachers are not well prepared leading to a deterioration of the quality of education in primary and secondary education. In Tanzania, teacher education is dominated by political control in which decision about the curriculum are centrally made (Wort, 1999). Decisions on curriculum are centralized and in most cases those who make decisions about the curriculum are politicians, university academician and curriculum developers (Meena, 2009). From this angle, Sjoholm and Hansen (2007) argue that it is not easy for teacher colleges to educate teachers to become professional actors but rather mechanical implementers of the curriculum. There is need to provide educators with more autonomy as part of their professional identity.

The need for teachers' continuous professional development for curriculum change implementation has never been as critically urgent as it is in the 21st century. Most reforms entail enormous changes to the school curriculum, the implementation of which, among other vital aspects, requires quality teachers that are equal to the task in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude. Thus, teacher development is of topical importance in a period of intense curriculum change implementation. With the recognition

that quality teaching can make a difference in curriculum change implementation, most education systems pay increasing attention to professional development programmes that support teacher learning throughout their careers (Robinson, 2008). A change in the roles of teachers is, however, not uniquely a Zambian experience. Elsewhere, teachers are required to play multiple roles. Duthilleul (2005) indicates that in most European countries, for instance, teachers are expected to initiate and manage the learning process, effectively address each learners' individual needs, assess literacy, integrate learners with special needs, integrate ICT into their teaching, assume managerial and leadership roles etc.

2.4. Theoretical Framework: Lewin's Theory of Planned Change

Lewin's (1947) Theory of Planned Change was the earliest model that was used to guide organizational change. It focuses on four elements that guide change namely; **field theory**, **group dynamics**, **action research** and **3-step model of change**. The field theory: emphasizes the importance of understanding change by mapping out the totality and complexity of the field in which it occurs. The field represents the environment in respect to the people or groups therein and the totality of coexisting factors which are conceived as mutually inter-independent. Group dynamics: are defined as forces operating in the group. Lewin (1947) advised that in order to understand behavior that is related to change the whole psychological field "life space" must be studied in its totality and complexity (Burnes, 2004). The field is considered to be in a continuous state of adaptation called "quasi-stationary equilibrium", thus change and constancy are seen as relative concepts because the group life is never without change. The forces of change that impinge on the group cause fluctuation in the seemingly rhythm and patterns of behavior and

3.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to understand managing teaching and learning for curriculum change implementation in colleges of education from the participants' perspective (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010) a qualitative and quantitative case study was undertaken. One of the research questions drawn from this bigger study is the focus

processes observed; and for the group to survive its members have to engage in self-reorganizing activities.

When change comes it is important to identify, plot and establish the potency of the field forces, to understand individual, group and organization responses.

The force field analysis is a management tool that considers the forces facilitating (driving) and those restraining change, with the object of identifying and solving the problems associated with change. Effective management of change requires the change managers to balance the two opposing forces by employing appropriate strategies that enable them to shift the balance in the direction of the planned change in a 3-step model (Lewin, 1947). **3-Step Model to Change**: The 3-step model to change has three main steps; un-freeze, transition and refreeze. Taken literally If one has a large cube of ice, but realize that what he wants is a cone of ice, first he has to melt the ice to make it amenable to change (unfreeze). After which the iced water is molded into the desired shape then solidified into the new shape (refreeze) (Thompson, 2013).

This theory presents the easier route to managing change in order to bring about desired and envisioned value. It should be stressed that human beings generally do not desire change as a result of uncertainty and other personal perceptions, hence the need to employ better methods when coming up with innovations such as revision of curriculum which basically affect masses of people and stakeholders. Stakeholder analysis, prior in-depth research, engagement and sound change management strategies are of utmost significance.

of this article i.e. how is teaching and learning managed for curriculum change implementation in colleges of education?

3.1. Study Context and Research Design

David Livingstone College of Education is one of the ten colleges offering courses for primary and secondary teaching in Zambia. The college was originally established to train primary

school teachers until it was upgraded to offer diploma programs for upper primary teachers of grades 8 and 9. This college was established in 1959 by the then Northern Rhodesia Christian Council. Owing to its long history, this institution has had privileges of being a pilot college every time in new curriculum is proposed for implementation. The foregoing were considered to be possible catalysts for high levels of pedagogical consciousness that may influence perceptions about introducing new curriculum in schools.

The researcher used purposive sampling to select the 18 lecturers and 2 administrators involved in the study. As this was a case study it was in the researcher's interest to choose the following sections that exist in the college; sociology of education, history and philosophy of education, educational psychology, curriculum studies and research, mathematics, English language, business studies, social studies, physical education and religious education. Two methods of data collection were used in this research. The first one was a self-completion questionnaire and the second method of data collection was conducted using structured interviews in order to validate responses obtained from the questionnaires.

3.2. Data collection

Two focus group sessions of about 90 minutes was held at different intervals. Individual interviews for principals were held in their offices and each was about 45 minutes long.

3.3. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data for this study. Specifically, frequencies, percentages, charts, figures and means were used to describe educational inputs provided in public schools using excel and Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) together with outputs and any other data requiring presentation in this format. For qualitative data which was collected through interviews; thematic analysis approach was used to analyze them.

3.4. Credibility Measures

To enhance the accuracy and credibility of findings, the following measures were adopted (Conrad & Serlin, 2006):

- Researcher took an objective stance and did not bring personal perspectives into the data or its analysis; and,
- Prior to finalizing findings, the tentative interpretation of data was referred to some respondents to clarify uncertainties and verify accuracy and plausibility of findings.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Before starting the study, permission was obtained from the Southern Province Education Office and the principal of the participating college. Participants were informed that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study if a need arises. They were also assured anonymity and confidentiality. The interviews were conducted in a non-threatening environment and were tape-recorded with the express permission of the respondents.

4.0. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings indicate that the majority of the participants were not prepared with skills and knowledge to implement changes in the curriculum. This position is consistent with other findings (Rahma, 2014) and is attributable to beliefs about and understanding of the curriculum pedagogy and learning. A detailed discussion of these findings is outlined under the following three themes which are discussed next capacity to support and monitor changes in the new curriculum, need for a new curriculum and challenges on the implementation of the new curriculum.

4.1. Capacity to Support and Monitor Changes in the New Curriculum

Interview data suggests that a minority of the participants have perceptions of rushing changes in the new curriculum. These misconceptions affect their participation in, and satisfaction with, the implementation of the new curriculum (Livingstone 2016). Coupled with the mixed feelings and rush implementation of the new curriculum it was also expressed that there had been an inadequate preparation for ground work in terms of teaching and learning materials. For instance, lecturers in the education department felt that there was no curriculum syllabus for

communication skills yet the subject was to be taught and students examined at the end of the day.

Findings reveal that the majority of the participants perceive that the changes in the curriculum were done hurriedly without the involvement of all key stakeholders. An example was given by the lecturer when he said that: "two topics were taught for some weeks in the first term and later suspended because they were supposed to be second-year topics. On effects of curriculum change, one participant pointed out that curriculum changes had affected his teaching negatively. An informative comment from one parent was:

> *"I do not know how assessment for mathematics students will be done. This is because mathematics students in other colleges of education have a single major while David Livingstone college students have a double major. How can these be subjected to a standardized examination when the depth of content is different?"*

Similarly, two lecturers from different sections at the college maintained that the new curriculum changes were demotivating in the subject area of specialization as the changes were a drawback on the intellectual growth and practice of the members. Furthermore, the changes in the curriculum had brought a lot of confusion in teacher education, especially in social sciences.

A point of concern is that, changes in the curriculum had affected their way of teaching (Macdonald, 2004). Consistent with other findings (Healeyn 2011; Rahman+, 2014) the majority of participants reported that Lecturers were not adequately prepared with skills and knowledge in implementing curriculum changes mostly an assumption was made based on long service experience but adequate preparation was not there. For example, to meet the demands of the new curriculum more time was needed to attend to students in both theory and practice in agricultural science whose periods of teaching in secondary schools has increased from six to twelve.

4.2. Need for a New Curriculum

Consistent with other findings (Alwan, 2006; Rogan, 2007; Towndrow, Silver & Albright, 2009) the majority of participants reported that there was a need for a new curriculum in colleges of education. Change that occurs in education includes change in policy goals, curriculum design and implementation, assessment techniques, administrative issues, leadership, classroom practices, instructional resources and teacher skills. The key to successful change therefore is by providing assistance to the teachers who are the implementers of change. However, educational policy makers as noted by (Kasapuglu, 2010; Rogan, 2007), focus their attention and energy on the 'what' of desired educational change and neglect the 'how' which according to (Altinyelken, 2010). Reportedly some of the changes are misplaced, were not well thought out and were rushed to be implemented. One participant had mixed feelings as expressed in the following statement:

> *"the intention looks good but the implementation is being done haphazardly. This has led to inadequate preparation for ground work in terms of teaching and learning materials."*

The irony is that, from the administrative point of view, it was felt that the new curriculum had brought new subject areas which some members of staff were not familiar with. An example was given of information and communications technology. The challenges therefore as noted by college administrator was that lecturers have continued teaching in the traditional way failing to embrace the new technology because of lack of skills while ICT has been made compulsory for students. This is consistent with the observation that other factors that are significant in determining the success of any curriculum reforms include the following and not limited to; the curriculum framework, teaching principles, teaching approaches, support materials, curriculum resources, the role of the implementers and how information on curriculum reform is communicated (Rahma, 2014).

4.3. Challenges on the Implementation of the New Curriculum

The majority of respondents expressed a concern curriculum change does not happen in a vacuum. There are a number of

stakeholders who may influence this change and these include political, technological advancement and teacher related factors among others. This militates against broad-based participation because invisible hand is always there to dictate how particular changes are to be implemented. Similarly, it defeats the equal participation requirement if the top-down approach to curriculum change is used. Such an approach gives a tight package of direct link to objectives, content and assessment (Macdonald, 2007). The role of the teacher therefore is passive with no input if any in the development of the curriculum. The thinking of curriculum planners are often times influenced by the ideologies and political power of the ruling government. It can therefore be seen as argued by Muricho and Changa'ch (2013) that political elites have been involved in educational reforms formally or informally more than educational specialists and planners, to ensure that their political agendas of national unity, development and cooperation are met.

The analysis of data reveals that technologies combined with educational innovations rises students' efficacy, efficiency and self-regulated learning habits (Neal, 2005 in Amino, et al. 2015). Such perceived benefits of technology in education are shaping reforms in teacher education in Zambia. The only predicament is that the Ministry of Education in Zambia has not been able to keep pace with the extensive and rapid changes in technology coupled with the demand for technological equipment in schools. One participant observed that:

"Changes in the curriculum are good especially for the linking of the school curriculum to the college but the only problem is that there is a dilution of the material taught to students mainly limiting them to a standard of a primary school."

This minority view does not suggest that implementation of the new curriculum is not significant. Rather, it points to the limited understanding of what could help stakeholders appreciate the essence of change in the curriculum.

5.0. CONCLUSION

This study has confirmed the view that managing teaching and learning for curriculum change in colleges of education in Zambia is a necessity but this is not effectively implemented. The study also established that there is no common understanding of, and commitment to, curriculum change implementation in colleges of education. While participants perceive themselves as possessing limited control on the way the curriculum is designed and implemented, they also admit to engaging in practices that amount to sabotage based on views held by different stakeholders. Whether real or imagined, perceptions of curriculum change implementation influence those who perceive themselves as end users such as lecturers and teachers with little or no say in the way the curriculum has been designed and suggested to be implemented it's a top bottom approach. They either withdraw from the shared decision-making process, or seek to consolidate their position by becoming indifferent to the entire process.

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