

SPOTLIGHT ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN THE POLYTECHNICS.

INTRODUCTION:

Until recently, not much had been done to promote the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship in our institutions of learning. However, with the growing awareness of the role of entrepreneurship education in nation building, there is awakened interest by both the public and private sectors for the introduction of the course in every programme of study in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Consequently, there is now a government directive that all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should incorporate and ensure the commencement of entrepreneurship education (EEd) as a course in all programmes to be taken by every student with effect from the 2007/2008 academic session. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) is already fully prepared to implement this directive.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

Entrepreneurship Education is not new in the curricula of polytechnic education. The course was first introduced in the curricula of the National Diploma (ND) Business Studies and the Higher National Diploma (HND) Business Administration and Management in 1990 and 1991 respectively. Since then, programmes such as HND Marketing, HND Purchasing and Supply and other related programmes had taken the course as a compulsory elective. However, the Board realized that there was the need for all students in the system to benefit from this training.

Since 2001, the Board had embarked on a massive review of its curricula. Incorporation of entrepreneurship in all programmes in the Polytechnics therefore formed a major part of this review exercise. Even the Vocational and Innovation Enterprise Institutions recently introduced by government, have, built in their curricula, this aspect of education. NBTE is thus at the forefront of implementing government directives in this regard.

SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT.

To ensure that this noble initiative takes off smoothly, the Board has provided various forms of support and assistance to the institutions in the following areas:

1. **Development of necessary documents for effective delivery of the course.** At the meeting of the National Council on Education (NCE) held in Calabar in 2006, all Higher Education Supervisory Agencies i.e. the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the National Universities Commission (NUC), and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) were mandated to develop Teachers Guide and Training Manuals that will facilitate and enhance the quality of teaching and learning of EEd as well as institutionalise entrepreneurship culture and spirit among their students. The issue of establishing Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) also featured prominently at the meeting.

Pursuant to this directive, the Board commissioned Messrs Hamitle Consults; a consultancy firm specialized in EEd, to cooperate with the Board on the production of the documents. The cooperation was aimed at:

- Production of common accepted curriculum and sensitizing all major stakeholders on its effective implementation;
- Production of entrepreneurial education teacher's guide/training manuals for use of Polytechnics and Monotechnics;
- Establishment of viable entrepreneurial training programmes in all Polytechnics for producing graduates with knowledge and skills in enterprise;
- Creating a group of Master Trainers as academic leaders in EEd and establishment of mentoring programme aimed at guiding students who have identified opportunities to turn into reality.

In order to develop the Teacher's Guide and Training Manuals as well as attain the fore-mentioned objectives, the following activities were planned and partly undertaken:

1. Several meetings among specialist officers and the consultant to develop draft curricula;
2. Stakeholders' workshop involving all institutions under the Board's supervision to ratify/adopt the curricula;
3. A series of working group meetings of selected experts to produce zero draft of Teacher's Guide and Training Manuals;
4. Stakeholders' workshop to critique the zero drafts of the Teacher's Guide and Training Manuals produced by the experts;
5. A series of working group meetings to incorporate feedback from the critique workshop into the drafts and produce the final Teacher's Guide and Training Manuals for EEd in the Polytechnics and Monotechnics;
6. Publication and printing of the documents and
7. Conduct of six Training-of-Master-Trainers workshops in the six geo-political zones of the country for lecturers and leaders in EEd

As a result of this collaboration, the Board is now in possession of current curriculum, Teacher's Guide and Training Manuals on EEd. The documents have already been made available to all higher institutions under the supervision of the Board. These documents will serve as a good guide to teachers of this course.

2. **Co sponsorship of and participation at the enlightenment workshop for policy makers in HEIs and the Train-the-Trainers (curriculum development) workshops organized by the Presidential Committee on Entrepreneurship Education in 2006.** The Board paid her contribution of N1.5 million and sponsored two senior officers to the workshops. Polytechnics were also encouraged to participate.
3. The Board has also **appointed and maintained** a member into the Presidential Committee on EEd which has its headquarters at the NUC in Abuja.

4. The Board **organized a one week training programme at the Songhai Centre, Porto Novo** for her senior officers involved in the project, in March this year. Several Polytechnics including Kaduna Polytechnic, Federal Polytechnic, Unwana-Afikpo, Kwara State Polytechnic and Federal Polytechnic, Bida, also sent participants to the training programme.
5. The Board had never hesitated to sponsor her officers to programmes that would enhance their capacity in entrepreneurship. Infact, the Board has **forged a training collaboration with the Songhai Centre and Covenant University** for the training of lecturers in the TVE sector. It is the intention of the Board to train more of its officers so as to prepare them for the effective discharge of their supervisory roles.

FEATURES OF THE CURRICULUM, TRAINING MANUAL AND TEACHERS' GUIDE:

The Curriculum

The curriculum of a programme is the totality of the experiences that is offered by the institution to achieve the philosophy, goal and objectives of the type and level of education (NBTE 1998). Curriculum may also be seen as “the sum of learning activities and experiences that a student has under the auspices or direction of the school (Finon & Grunkilton, 1984)

The two definitions have the student, learning experience and activities as their control focus. They also emphasize general/ academic (education for life) and vocational/technical education (education for a living). This is the focus of the EEd Curriculum.

The curriculum is divided into three components made up of EEd 126 (Introduction to Entrepreneurship) and EEd 216 (Practice of Entrepreneurship) to be taken by National Diploma (ND) students in their first and second years in the second and first semesters respectively, and EEd 413 (Entrepreneurship Development) to be taken by the Higher National Diploma (HND) Students in their first year in the first semester.

Special Features

Presently, curricula for all programmes emanating from the Board are structured in line with the UNESCO format adopted by the Board. The format consists of the following special features:

- The curriculum is divided into weeks in such a way that the teacher is able to effectively cover it within the stipulated time frame.
- What the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course and at the end of every lecture are clearly enumerated as general objectives and specific learning outcomes respectively. The aim is to guide both the teacher and the student in the course of teaching and learning.
- Teachers' activities have also been suggested to guide the teacher in ensuring that the learning outcomes are achieved.
- Also, teaching resources have been suggested as a guide to both the teacher and student all aimed at ensuring effective teaching and learning.

- Furthermore, the curriculum is divided into two columns for theory and practical delivery. This will ensure that the teacher re-enforces theory with practice to ensure that the student achieves the set goal and objectives.
- The courses' main aim/goal is lucidly spelt out for the three modules to enable both the teacher and student lay a solid foundation for their journey.

Generally, therefore, the curriculum has addressed most of the general characteristics of any training curriculum which emphasizes education for a living i.e. training for the acquisition of specific skills and knowledge to perform identified tasks. Because they focus on both skill and academic outcomes, their characteristics include those for education for life and education for living. These characteristics include: orientation, justification, focus, in-school success standards, out-of-school success standards, responsiveness, logistic, expense, etc.

It is however important to point out that no curriculum is absolutely all encompassing. Therefore, this curriculum is made flexible so as to accommodate those relevant areas institutions feel very passionate about but which have not been captured.

Teachers' guide

Though curriculum and instruction are interrelated, they are distinctly different from each other. While curriculum constitutes a broad range of learning experiences in a school setting, instruction focuses on the delivery of those experiences.

Instruction is the planned interaction between teachers and students that is expected to result in desirable learning.

While curriculum development focuses primarily on content and areas related to it, instructional development on the other hand consists of planning done in direct support of student learning, taking into account the principles of human learning and the conditions under which it occurs. Instructional development is carried out from the broad goals of curriculum development.

In realization of the above fact, a Teachers' Guide was conceived by the Board to assist teachers in their delivery of the EEd curriculum.

Special features

It is realized that for young people to manage their futures successfully, they need a clear purpose and a **can-do** attitude that will allow them to take advantage of opportunities be they in a personal, business, work, self-employment or community setting. Demands by business and industry for more relevant skills and knowledge have increased the need for schools to develop enterprising attributes through their teaching and learning. People in both their working and their personal lives need to be self-motivated, creative, flexible, resourceful and prepared to take initiative.

By fostering positive personal attributes such as responsibility, commitment, integrity and initiative, and skills in negotiating and networking, teachers enhance the ability of young people to participate more fully in their local community both as students and after school.

Bearing in mind the above objective, a Teachers' Guide for the teaching of EEd was developed to guide teachers of the course towards efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of the curriculum.

The guide attempts to spell out the various teaching styles and strategies available to the teacher. The teacher is however free to choose and adopt any of the strategies or a combination of them in his delivery in so far as it will improve the quality of learning.

The guide also suggests different types of assessment and evaluation techniques open to the teacher and the percentage scores for continuous assessment and examinations.

The Training Manual

This document attempts to provide a brief description of every topic in the curriculum and Teachers' Guide. The aim is to introduce both the teacher and student to the topics so as to guide them in their further reading.

Teachers should therefore equip themselves adequately with more detailed information on all topics for students' maximum benefit, as the information provided in the manual is merely an introductory guide.

The manual also contains suggested activities which students are expected to perform. Teachers are encouraged to ensure that students carry out such activities under their guidance.

Furthermore, the manual suggests reading materials including the internet, which will greatly assist the teacher in obtaining relevant materials for his lectures as well as the students in obtaining information to help them in their daily routine.

The Manual contains training topics and typical areas of life skill training such as social skills, money management, employability, etc. It is specifically designed for success in life endeavours. It is assumed that the student has or is taking part in another training programme to learn other skills and become more independent. The manual will thus provide additional skills that will consolidate the existing ones.

Although the Training Manual is intended to be used by facilitators (teachers), the materials are learner centered. Students are involved throughout the process and responsibility for learning moves from the teacher to the learner. This is achieved when the teacher/trainer becomes a facilitator and creates a learning environment for learners to engage in structured experiences individually, in small groups, or as a class, and through a process of reflection and review, develop certain skills. These skills can then be applied to a variety of situations. To achieve this, the manual suggests the employment of techniques such as group discussion, role playing, counseling and brainstorming to ensure the active

participation of the student throughout the learning process. Through these activities, a great deal of emphasis is placed on learner motivation.

FUTURE PLANS

The Board had long realized the dearth of qualified personnel in the Polytechnics to effectively deliver the curriculum. In an effort to build sufficiently qualified capacity that would impart the desired knowledge, skill and competencies from the curriculum, there is a plan by the Board to train selected lecturers from all the Polytechnics on curriculum delivery and evaluation using the appropriate teaching methods, styles and strategies. Already the Board has developed the necessary guidelines for teachers of the programme.

The Board has therefore engaged the services of a consultant to handle the training programme using the Curriculum, Teacher's Guide and Training Manuals developed by the Board. Institutions have been communicated to nominate prospective lecturers of the programme for screening and selection of suitable ones that will eventually be trained as master trainers.

To ensure that the programme achieves the objective of producing graduates with the required entrepreneurial skills and competencies who would establish businesses on graduation, the Board is planning to establish pilot Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) in some selected institutions to serve as avenues/clinics for imparting practical skills. A committee was dispatched to Covenant University, Ota to understudy their ESC with a view to advising on the appropriate model that will suit the polytechnics. As resources become available, the same Committee will be dispatched to the Songhai Centre, also to understudy the operations of the Centre, its principles, practices as well as the layout. The essence is to compare the two centers in order to come up with a hybrid model suitable for our system.

It is the conviction of the Board that these efforts will complement those of the CBN in providing entrepreneurial laboratories in the country. It would be recalled that the CBN promised to establish six (6) ESCs, one in each of the six geopolitical zones.

CONCLUSION:

Technical and Vocational Education is an expensive business. Although the Board is determined to accelerate the growth and development of this sector of education, availability of required human and material resources is a major militating factor. We therefore wish to use this medium to appeal to all stakeholders and friends of this sector to come to our aid so that we can collectively move the sector forward.

Institutions are required to reciprocate the Board's gesture and complement its effort by ensuring that EEd commences in all programmes in the 2007/08 academic session and establishing ESCs as well as build adequate capacity that will effectively drive the process.

