A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL BOARD FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION OLD AND NEW CURRICULUM IN OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

AZIH, NONYE (Ph.D)
Department of Business Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

EJEKA CHARLES A
Department of Office Technology and Management,
Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo – Ohaji

ABSTRACT: *The paper examined the persistent issue of curriculum review in Office Technology and Management which is now used in the Nigerian Polytechnics. The convergence of computer, telecommunication, the internet and microelectronics with business environment has brought to the fore, the emerging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sub skills that are lacking in the curriculum for producing the office worker in Nigeria. The prevailing circumstance where the secretary has to work with modern technology used in this digital era led to the review of the old curriculum for secretarial studies. The review of OTM curriculum was taken with the view to produce graduates who could be effective in the Management roles and have confidence and practical skills necessary to put theory into action It also looked at consequential issues concerning inadequate provision of human and material resources as well as the need to ensure that the OTM programme is adequately funded to ensure that requisite facilities are provided for effective training of the recipients of the programme and equally emphasized on the need for training and retraining of the lecturers in the polytechnic on the prerequisite skills needed to teach this novel ICT softwares.*

KEYWORDS: Sustainable Development, Technical Education, Curriculum, ICT

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum review has been the dominant issue in business education. The sustained call for a review was triggered off by a revolution in business office brought about by continually emerging technologies. Twenty five years ago Anyaduba as cited by Maduabuchi (2008) complained about the prevalence of archaic curriculum studies in business education and secretarial studies. So much has been said and written on the subject matter by different stake-holders. Chukwu (2006) warned: that the relevance of business education curriculum will be tied to its readiness and willingness to adapt to recent technological changes, notably in the information and communication sector. He contended that changes in business strategies, such as the concept of outsourcing, will by necessity alter the operating environment of the professional secretary. He added that the corollary to these is that there is a need for a major review of the existing curriculum.

A curriculum should be all the planned experiences and courses (comprising general/liberal studies courses, professional/technical courses and foundation/basic courses), which are

provided and given to learners for certification under the guidance of the school. A good curriculum must fulfill the following criteria:

(a)   Identify the needs of the society.

(b)   Have clearly stated and testable objectives

(c)   Ensure adequate selection of content and learning experiences

(d)   Efficient organization of the learning content and learning experiences

(e)   Systematic evaluation of the content and learning experiences to ascertain whether the objectives have been achieved.

In consideration of the above stated criteria, the new Office Technology and Management (OTM) curriculum was introduced to replace the old curriculum as stated in the National Board for Technical Education (1989) course specification for secretarial studies. This is because we are in a digital era where documents are stored in electronic form. Presently, records can be managed using electronic filing techniques and electronic document interchange. The paperless office of today is rendering secretaries and allied business graduates irrelevant in contemporary functions of business organizations. These factors and more must have necessitated the NBTE curriculum modules for the Office Technology and Management programme in Nigeria Polytechnics to be reviewed.

According to Maduabuchi (2008), the whole idea about educational reforms in Nigeria is the desire to produce an all round educated persons that will be economically useful, but conscientious members of our society. In technical, vocational and business education, the aim is to provide for our system the type of teaching/learning situations that focus not on artifacts, but on public knowledge, skill, competencies and procedures for making, using and doing things in specifiable and reproducible ways. According to Arofalease (2005), the future of technical (including business and vocational) education is going in the direction of integration of the following areas of emphasis on the existing curriculum and delivery:

(i)   Competency based approach, that is functional literacy;

(ii)   Increased academic, critical and problem solving skills development;

(iii)   Entrepreneurship based delivery;

(iv)   Incorporation of establishment and utilization of production units within technical education institution for practical work training and self-reliance and

(v)   ICT based teaching/learning approaches.

Office Technology and Management Programme

Office technology and management progrramme is one of the courses offered in the polytechnics. This programme was introduced to replace secretarial studies. The OTM programme was introduced by National Board for Technical (NBTE) which is a body that controls the activities of the polytechnics. The latest curriculum was designed in 2004 by NBTE and many ICT courses were included in the programme. Adelakin (2009) observed that the OTM programme was designed for two major reasons, first as a response to the

yearning of the secretarial studies students and practitioners on the need to change the name of the programme as their products are only suitable for the traditional office environment. He further stated that most importantly as a result of the change in curriculum with more emphasis on ICT and management so as to enrich the knowledge of the students and equip them with necessary skills needed in today's office environment. The following is the old and new curriculum of OTM:

The Old and New Curriculum in Office Technology and Management.

By the curriculum review, the programme nomenclature – Secretarial Studies will cease to hold, as Office Technology and Management (OTM) will substitute it.

ND Programme in Office Technology and Management

First Semester – Old Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	L/P	CH
SEC 101	Beginning Shorthand (60wam)	10	5
SEC 111	Beginning Typewriting (25wam)	8	4
ACC 111	Principles of Accounts	3	3
BAM 111	Introduction to Business	3	3
GNS 101	Use of English	3	3
GNS 120	Contemporary Social Problems and History of Nigeria	3	3
Total		30	21

First Semester – New Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 101	Technical English	2	2	4
GNS 111	Citizenship Education	2	-	2
BAM 111	Introduction to Business	2	1	3
OTM 111	Shorthand 1	2	2	2
OTM 113	ICT 1	1	7	8
OTM 114	Office Practice 1	1	3	4
Total		10	15	25

Second Semester – Old Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	L/P	CH
SEC 102	Shorthand (80wam)	10	5
SEC 112	Typewriting (35wam)	8	4
SEC 120	Office Practice	4	4
MTH 100	Business Mathematics	3	3
BAM 102	Principles of Law	2	2
GNS 102	Communication in English I	3	3
Total		30	21

Second Semester – New Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 214	ICT II	1	7	8
GNS 121	Citizenship Education II	1	1	2
CEED 126	Introduction to Entrepreneurship	1	2	3
BAM 113	Principles of Law	1	1	2
OTM 122	Career Development	2	2	4
OTM 121	Shorthand II	2	2	4
OTM 124	Modern Office Technology	1	3	4
Total		9	18	27

Third Semester – Old Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	L/P	CH
SEC 201	Shorthand (90wam)	10	5
SEC 211	Typewriting (40wam)	8	4
SEC 230	Secretarial Duties	3	3
GNS 125	Principles of Economics 1	3	3
GNS 201	Use of English II	3	3
GNS 121	Government	3	3
SEC 241	Word Processing	2	2
Total		32	22

Third Semester – New Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 201	Technical English II	2	2	4
OTM 228	Research Techniques	2	2	4
OTM 211	Shorthand III	1	3	4
OTM 213	Records Management	1	1	2
OTM 215	Office Practice II	1	3	4
OTM 216	Desktop Publishing	1	5	6
ACC III	Principles of Accounting	1	3	4
Total		9	19	28

Fourth Semester – Old Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	L/P	CH
SEC 202	Shorthand (100 wam)	10	5
SEC 212	Typewriting (50wam)	8	4
GNS 126	Principles of Economics II	2	2
GNS 212	Communication in English II	3	2
GNS	Introduction to Psychology	3	3
SEC 220	Project	2	2
SEC 242	Word Processing II	2	2
Total		30	20

Fourth Semester – New Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 227	Social Psychology	2	2	4
BAM 114	Principles of Economics I	2	1	3
OTM 221	Web Page Design	1	7	8
OTM 222	Communication Skills	1	3	4
OTM 225	Project	-	6	6
OTM 226	Small Business Management	1	1	2
Total		7	20	27

HND Programme in Office Technology and Management
First Semester – Old Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	L/P	CH
SEC 301	Shorthand 100wam (Consolidated)	10	5
SEC 311	Typewriting 50 wam (Consolidated)	8	4
BAM 331	Business Law I	3	3
GNS301	Use of English III	3	3
GNS	One Elective in GNS	3	3
SEC 330	Office Administration and Management	3	3
Total		30	21

First Semester – New Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 321	Shorthand IV	1	3	4
OTM 313	ICT Office Application	2	6	8
OTM 314	Office Administration and Management I	2	2	4
OTM 315	Business Communications I	2	2	4
OTM 316	Social Psychology	2	2	4
BAM 214	Business Law	2	2	4
Total		11	17	28

Second Semester – Old Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	L/P	CH
SEC 302	Shorthand (110 wam)	8	4
SEC 304	Advanced Transcription I	6	3
SEC 312	Typewriting (55 wam)	8	4
BAM 332	Business Law II	3	3
GNS	Communication in English III	3	3
GNS	Research Technique	3	3
Total		31	20

Second Semester – New Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 325	Research Methods	1	3	4
BAM 427	Nigerian Labour Law	2	2	4
OTM 322	Professional Career Development	3	2	4
OTM 323	ICT Office Application II	2	6	8
OTM 324	Office Administration and Management II	2	2	4
BAM 324	Human Capital Management	2	2	4
Total		11	17	28

Third Semester – Old Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	L/P	CH
SEC 401	Shorthand (120 wam)	10	5
SEC 411	Typewriting (60 wam)	8	4
SEC 420	Business Communication	3	3
BAM	Personnel Management/ Human Relations	3	3
GNS 401	Communication in English IV	3	3
GNS 480	Industrial Psychology	2	2
SEC 430	Seminar	2	2
Total		31	22

Third Semester – New Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 411	Advanced Transcription	1	3	4
OTM 412	Business Communication II	2	6	8
OTM 413	Database Management System	1	3	4
OTM 414	Oral Communication skills	1	3	4
BAM 224	Elements of Human Resources Mgt	2	1	3
OTM 415	Advanced Desktop Publishing	2	6	8
Total		9	18	27

Fourth Semester – Old Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	L/P	CH
SEC 402	Advanced Transcription II	8	4
BAM	Personnel Management/ Human Relations II	3	3
GNS 402	Business Comm. Literary Appreciation and Oral Composition	3	3
SEC 440	Project	3	1
ACC 1	Data Processing	2	2
SEC 441	Office Information System	2	4
Total		21	17

Forth Semester – New Curriculum

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 423	Management Information Systems	1	3	4
OTM 424	Professional Ethics and Social Respons.	2	2	4
BAM 413	Entrepreneurship	2	2	4
OTM 425	Advanced Webpage Design	2	6	8
BAM 427	Nigerian Labour Law	1	2	3
OTM 422	Project	-	6	6
Total		8	21	29

Sources: NBTE (ND) and (HND) in Office Technology and Management and Secretarial Studies curriculum and course specification.

The new curriculum (Office Technology and Management) substituted manual typewriting with keyboarding I, II, III at the NDI and ND II levels with no keyboarding in second semester of ND II. Shorthand, a course that distinguishes a secretary from other office workers is being systematically eliminated from the scene. At the ND level, OTM III, OTM 121 and OTM 211 christened shorthand I, II and III respectively will be taught in semesters I, II and III respectively with nothing to teach in the final semester of the ND programme.

The main features of the new curriculum at the Higher National Diploma level were the stoppage of shorthand at the first semester of HND I; the offering at the establishment stage, such courses as ICT Office Applications I and II in the second semester; Professional Career Development. The stoppage of Advanced Transcription at HND II first semester and introduction of Database Management System; Management Information Systems; Advanced Desktop Publishing and Oral Communications skills all at the HND II stage.

It is possible that the designers of the course specifications hinged their argument on the flux in technology and environment. They may argue further that the change in nomenclature or title from secretarial studies to Office Technology and Management (OTM) is a pointer to the need for the change. This change will certainly attract reactions and worries from professionals and teachers which to a great extent have been addressed by the new curriculum.

Issues on the Newly Introduced OTM Programme

The polytechnics in Nigeria have used this OTM programme for some years, yet some graduates of the programme seem not to be competent in the usage of ICT facilities in the office. Considering that the curriculum for OTM is ICT based tailored towards the needs of the modern office (Ugwuanyi, 2012). This negates the ideas of introducing the programme which is aimed at improving the quality of the graduates of the programme. This is in line with the observations of Okoro (2013) who noted that indications emerging from the world of works seem to indicate that the ND and HND graduates do not seem to show adequate competency in ICT application in their place of work. This could be attributed to the quality of the OTM programme. This raises the question as to the level of availability and utilization of ICT applications for instruction in Nigerian polytechnics.

Resource provision is an imperative in every institution offering OTM. Provision of resources includes both human and material resources. Lack of Funds is a major challenge experienced in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Office Technology and Management department in any Polytechnic in Nigeria is capital intensive especially with the introduction of the new curriculum in Office Technology and Management. There must be increased funding to make any meaningful effort towards the realization of the objectives of the new curriculum.

In some of the polytechnics, there is dearth of human and material resources for teaching the OTM courses. In a study carried out by Amaiya (2013) and others, they found out that the OTM programme in Delta state Polytechnic faces the problem of inadequacy of ICT resources and had hampered the acquisition of knowledge and skills expected to prepare the learners for the world of work. Ojukwu (2009) equally opines that some polytechnics do not have enough ICT resources to competently deliver ICT related new courses in OTM programme being implemented nation wide. There are insufficient number of Computers in some polytechnics. Computers are basic to all teaching and learning activities involving teachers and students in the new curriculum since the curriculum is ICT compliant. We are all witnesses to the fact that these computers are just not there in our laboratories and classrooms; where they exist they are few in number. The result is that in some cases time or less number of students are allocated to one set of computer. The inconveniences and frustration can only be imagined. When the required resources are not provided teaching and learning will be seriously hampered since the students will not receive sufficient training as a result of inadequate attention paid to practicability of the ICT skills.

In another study carried out by Amiaya (2013) on integrating new technologies into the OTM curriculum: challenges and strategies, he found out that among others lack of new technologies, non possession of skills in the utilization of the facilities by the lecturers, poor electricity supply, poor funding are the challenges militating against the integration of the new OTM curriculum. Rehimetu (2014) in a study carried out on ICT competence among academic staff in Auchi polytechnic in Edo state found out that lecturers in the polytechnics can moderately perform basic computer operations, low at using internet resources, moderate at use of application software and low at the use of peripherals (ICT equipment.)

Most practicing Office Technology and Management lecturers today took a course that was then referred to as computer appreciation. The content of that course was theoretical and informative. To say that majority of this group of teachers are contending with computer anxiety is a statement of fact. This so because, the knowledge, skills and competencies required to fit into ICT classrooms is quite different from the ones they posses. Until now no institutional staff development programmes have been organized for them, but since the NBTE made the introduction of the new curriculum mandatory they must in a way implement the curriculum to retain their job, hence the anxiety. Some teachers, out of personal sacrifice, went a stage ahead to acquire additional computer skills that will enable them to guide the students with limited confidence. Others lacked time to make an attempt. Effective teaching and learning demands that the teacher must have a mastery of the skills. But it becomes worrisome when the lecturer expected to impact the requisite skills lacks the ability to perform those skills. This invariable will lead to poor mastery of the skills by the students.

CONCLUSION

No doubt the new curriculum in Office Technology and Management is timely when the flux in technology and environment is challenging the present curriculum. The Office Technology and Management graduates of today are not only required to have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills in ICT, computer operations, Internet connectivity but are also expected to possess competencies in converging in the telecommunication and cyberspace technology. The new curriculum presents formidable problem of implementation in terms of resources and logistics. If these issues of resources are addressed, the curriculum will provide the antidote to unemployment, unemployability, and examination malpractices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper recommends as follows:

The need for regular training and retraining is very important, workshops, seminars and conferences should be mounted for serving staff to sensitize and update the knowledge of lecturers in ICT based curriculum.

The material resources listed in the new curriculum to facilitate effective teaching and learning should be provided.

Classroom and physical facilities should be improved and new ones built to enable the teaming student population take part in the pedagogy of the new curriculum.

There is need to recruit staff with relevant background in the new curriculum. The possession of ICT skills and knowledge should be an advantage for prospective personnel seeking teaching appointment in Office Technology and Management department.

REFERENCES

Adelakingy, R. T. (2009). Issues and trends in teaching and learning of office technology and management. Association of business educators of Nigeria (ABEN) Book of Readings, 1(9), 114-123.

Amaiya A.O. (2013) Strategies for improving the provision of ICT resources in office technology and management programme in the polytechnics in Delta state, Nigeria. American International Journal of Contemporary Research 4(1) 291-296. Retrieved from www. Aijernet.com on 2/5/15.

Arolasate, G. (2005). The use of ICT in Technical Education. A paper presented at an

ETF sponsored Capacity Building workshop for lecturers of Polytechnics and Monotechnics in Nigeria, October, 2005.

Chukwu, C. O. O (2006). Opening remarks presented at the 16th Annual National

Conference of the National Association of Professional Secretarial Staff of Nigeria (NAPSSON)

Maduabuchi, I (2008). A Critique of the new curriculum in Office Technology and Management. Business Education Journal 1(2) 209-220.

National Board for Technical Education (1989). *Secretarial studies curriculum and course specifications*. Kaduna: Atman ltd.

National Board for Technical Education (2004). *Curriculum and course specification (ND and HND) in office technology and management*. Kaduna: Atman ltd.

Ojukwu, K. (2009). A review of literature on empowerment of office technology and management teachers of Nigerian polytechnics. Business Education Journal, 7(1) 3-8.

Okoro, O. B. (2013). Assessment of ICT competencies possessed by polytechnic OTM lecturers in South-South geo-polital zone of Nigeria. Retrieved on 2/5/2015.

Rehimetu J. (2014). ICT competence among academic staff in Auchi polytechnic, Auch, Edo state, Nigeria. Nigerian Journal of Business Education 1(3) 250-261.

Ugwuanyi, M. O. (2012). Strategies of improving educational resources in office technology and management departments in the polytechnics. Business Education Journal, 8(2) 99-109.