

Chapter 78

Educational Innovations in Nigeria: Planning, Reasons for Failure, and Prospects

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the concept of change as it relates to educational innovation in Nigeria. It describes change as a transition from one state to another. It highlights some of the descriptions of change, its characteristics, and process. It further discusses innovation as a product of change and that both are intertwined. The chapter also raises some of the reasons why innovation ideas (such as 6-3-3-4, 5-6-2-3 systems of education, UPE, UBE, Mother tongue, Nomadic education, amongst others) have failed in Nigeria. These reasons include lack of preparation, lack of effective implementation, lack of funds, etc. It concludes by pointing readers to issues that could be considered salient for innovation prospects such as policy issues on the part of the government, educational technology as a pivot for innovation implementation, training of teachers and other personnels that would be involved in the implementation process, caring for the new generation of learners, and the process of innovation adoption.

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INTRODUCTION

The Concept of Change

The Cambridge International Dictionary of English described 'change' from many angles. Foremost, it means to make or become different or to exchange one thing for another thing, especially of a similar type. When something becomes different, or the result of something becomes different, we talk of a change. As a result, one can talk of organizational, educational, social or political change. In a similar vein, the Encarta describe change as 'transition from something' or a shift from one state, stage or phase to another. It can also mean to alter, modify, convert, transform or transmute. It also implies revolution, conversion, adjustment or amendment. When something becomes different from its initial state, both living and non-living, we talk of 'change'. However, not all changes result in an improvement. There is a French saying 'plus ça change plus c'est la même chose' which means the more things change, the more they stay the same, leaving no improvement. This signifies that things may remain the same with some changes. Change, according to Rogers (1983) is referred to as social change, and defined as the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system. When new ideas are invented, diffused, and are adopted or rejected, leading to certain consequences, social change occurs. Of course, such change can happen in other ways too, for example, through a political revolution or through a natural event like a drought or earthquake.

Further, change can be seen as evidence of growth. Meaning that what worked today can be tomorrow's recipe for failure. Once you start seeing yourself as a lifelong learner, looking for ways to grow and improve, change becomes your friend. We ought to learn from the people we meet, pursue new ideas, methods, strategies and ways to push ourselves away from contentment. Our

bodies for example change no matter how hard we exercise. Our homes change as our needs ebb and flow. Our places of employment change as the winds of economic forces blow and new opportunities come. All these point to the fact that change is inevitable.

From this brief introduction, the following can be deduced of change.

1. Change is a process that cuts across time, not event-driven.
2. Change entails exchange i.e. from the old order to the new order.
3. Change sometimes leads to improvement.
4. Not all change results in improvement, some may lead to retrogression and/or negative impact.
5. Change is an evidence of growth.
6. Change is inevitable. No wonder Fullan (2001) concluded as follows: Change is inevitable, and we must learn to live with it; change is not going away, thus the best strategy for sustainable change is the formation of professional communities that are able to deal with issues (both minor and major) as they occur.
7. Change can be generated or triggered by actions and reactions of positive or negative elements.

Change possesses some characteristics and qualities. Some of the characteristics are identified as follows: (i) it draws its energy or power from obscurity, (ii) change can either be planned or spontaneous (iii) change is potent-either constructive or destructive.

Qualities of a change on the other hand are discussed below:

- The qualities of a change in a society is as good as the qualities of the changers or the initiators of a change.

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