



STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING VERBATIM REPORTING INTO BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

IBRAHIM FOLAHANMI JIMOH

*Dept of Bus. and Entrepreneurship Education,
Kwara State University, Malete
P.M.B. 1530, Ilorin
Kwara State
folahanmijimoh@gmail.com*

Prof. T. A. UMORU, (Faben)

*Dept of Bus. and Entrepreneurship Education,
Kwara State University, Malete
P.M.B. 1530, Ilorin
Kwara State
Titus.umoru@kwasu.edu.ng*

Abstract

The paper sought the perception of Verbatim Reporters and Business Educators on the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into business education curriculum in North-Central Universities, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of all verbatim reporters in the Houses of Assembly and all the business educators in Universities offering business education in North-Central, Nigeria totaling 44, made up of 28 verbatim reporters and 16 business educators. One researcher-designed questionnaire titled “Strategies for integrating Verbatim reporting into Business education Curriculum Questionnaire“(CIVIBEC) was used to obtain responses from the respondents. The questionnaire adopted a four-point rating scale. The data gathered for this study was statistically analyzed by using Mean and standard deviation to answer the research question while paired-samples t-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The finding revealed that the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting to business education curriculum include among others ICT utilization, a six-month SIWES among others The finding from the hypothesis proved that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of Business Education lecturers and verbatim reporters regarding the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education curriculum in North-central Nigerian Universities. Based on the findings and conclusion made, the study recommended that ICT utilization must be intensified to replace shorthand, introduction of a part-time programme for reporters on duty to upgrade their certificate{s} and a six-months practical parliamentary reporting as SIWES for business education students be put in place among others.

Keywords: *Strategies, Integration, Verbatim reporting; Business Education Curriculum; North-Central Universities.*



Introduction

Verbatim reporting is a dying trade in the Nigerian educational system; yet the profession remains highly in demand in Nigerian courts and parliaments at the national and local levels. Indeed, it has been argued that parliamentary reporters are indispensable if Nigerian's current democratic dispensation is to be sustained and strengthened. This situation demands the identification of methods to sustain the profession which is grossly associated with secretaryship. In Nigeria, secretaryship is regarded as a business education course. Business education is a conglomerate of courses concerned with the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper values for the survival of the individuals and the society (FRN, 2009). Business education is an education for and about business. It combines both theoretical and practical knowledge. In the same vein, it exposes the recipient to the economic system of his country and equips him with lifelong skills that would enable him to make reasonable judgment as a producer (entrepreneur), employee or consumer of goods and services.

The term curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. Depending on how broadly educators define or employ the term, curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which include the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning. Verbatim reporting curriculum is therefore the lessons and academic content taught for the award of a certificate in Verbatim Reporting at Federal Training Centres in Nigeria.

According to the American Vocational Association (AVA) in Osuala (2009), business education is a programme of instruction which consists of two parts: (a) office education; a vocational education programme for office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading education leading to employability and advancement in office occupation, and (b) general business education; a programme to provide students with information and competencies needed by all in managing personal and business affairs and in using the services of the business world. Thus, business education helps individuals to acquire saleable skills that will enable them fit into various business organizations or be self-employed in the absence of paid employment.



Employers continually demand skilled and knowledgeable workers but due to the new and increasingly complex technological challenges faced by the educational system, it is not preparing students adequately for the workplace. Thus, organizations are experiencing increased demand to provide employees at all levels with adequate learning. A well-articulated business education programming, if properly implemented with efficiently deliverable teaching infrastructure can help bridge the skill gaps existing between school graduates and the requirements of corporate business organizations thus, reducing the huge cost of human resource development in business organizations.

Verbatim reporting is an important tool for parliamentary reporters in Nigeria. Parliamentary reporters take down, word-for-word, what is being said in the debates. Reporters take their notes in shorthand before transcribing them. The notes are then compiled and published as the Official Reports of Parliament, more popularly known as the Hansard. All the reporters in the legislatures across the country were trained Confidential Secretaries, and are therefore products of business education (Office option). The Federal Training Centres (FTC), in the main, has been the training institutions. The resource to draw trainee reporters from the pool of secretaries has a historical antecedent dated back 1959 when there was no organized training of official reporters, neither was a cadre of staff assembled for that purpose Ayodele (2014). It is from the pool of skilled secretaries that trainee reporters have largely been drawn over the years to undergo two sessions in reportorial skills.

Umoru (2012), maintained that specialized workers will continuously be needed to perform various tasks required to keep organizations working smoothly and providing the products and services required by customers. In this age of skill competition, he maintained that workers must continue to obtain training in handling various types of activities. As technology explodes in one face, new ways of doing things become inevitable. Therefore, for Legislative organization to work smoothly, the Verbatim Reporters need quality training in line with the technological age.

Curriculum integration can be described as an approach to teaching and learning that is based on both philosophy and practicality. It can generally be defined as a curriculum approach that purposefully draws together knowledge, skills, attitudes and values from within or across subject areas to develop a more powerful understanding of key ideas. Curriculum integration occurs when components of the curriculum are connected and related in meaningful ways by both the students and teachers. Integration of the curriculum entails a lot of time and work in respect of planning, organization and execution. The teachers have to be deeply involved,



enthusiastic and cooperative, especially over departmental borders, which will produce positive spin-off effects in teaching and research but may also generate conflicts that must be resolved. According to Bordbar (2018), teacher's competence is a major factor in integrating verbatim reporting into business education curriculum.

Some form of staff development will almost certainly be needed. The aim should be to: (1) familiarize the staff with the objectives of an integrated programme and allow them to explore its advantages, (2) identify the local barriers to increased integration as an initial step and address them effectively and (3) explain the staff members how the integrated teaching/learning programme will be delivered and their roles and responsibilities in it. This also includes explaining the role of the study guides and logbooks, the range of learning situations and the approach to the assessment process.

It may be ideal to change to a whole new integrated curriculum, but that may be too challenging for some of the academics and the existing infrastructure and facilities may not be adequate for a rapid change. To start with, the scope of integration may be limited to only a module or a phase (consisting of several modules). This will help to adapt to a change gradually, would be less stressful and will provide an opportunity to learn from the experience. Malik and Malik (2011) reiterated that it is vital to set up different working groups and define their responsibilities with each module having its own Integrated Committee (IC). It is vital to set up different working groups and define their responsibilities. Each module should have its own Integration Committee (MIC) which may be led by the module coordinator (MC). The Faculty Integration Committee (FIC) should be led by a senior academician preferably by one who also holds a key post such as deputy dean academics. The membership of the working team would depend upon the module to be integrated. For a pre-clerkship module, apart from representatives of all the Business education disciplines (e.g. Accounting, Office Technology and Management and Marketing) the team should include a business educator and at least one relevant Entrepreneurship teacher as a member. For a Business education module, the majority of the members would be Business educators with relevant basic experiences. Each team should choose their secretary and scribe and specify their roles. FIC should comprise the senior faculty members. The representatives from different relevant disciplines may be invited as and when required. The MCs would present their integrated modules to the FIC where each module should be examined thoroughly and critically, mainly emphasizing on: Learning outcomes; Contents; Relationship of contents to the learning outcomes and themes; Sequencing of topics; Teaching/learning methods for each topic; Contents of each topic and their relation to the learning outcomes and Assessment methods. This corroborates the view of



Kinsiz (2010) who stated that teaching strategies, for all practical purposes, mean the same thing.

Learning outcomes are the statements that describe significant and essential learning that learner's would have achieved and could reliably demonstrate at the end of the course (Spady 1994). The learning outcomes should be short statements that are easy to communicate and usually begin with an action verb. They must be well developed as they not only specify what is to be achieved at the end of a module, but also guide in the identification of the curriculum content, the teaching/learning methodologies and assessment methods. The learning outcomes of the module should be identified by the MIC and approved by FIC. The learning outcomes of each module may be general which are broad statements and specific which accurately and specifically identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be achieved in a particular module. Kizlik, (2017) stated that teaching strategies, for all practical purposes, mean the same thing. Regardless of what we call such processes, they are primarily descriptions of the leaning objective-oriented activities and flow of information between teachers and students. In the same vain, Godstime (2016) suggested that regular embarking on excursion, use of apprenticeship system, Students' work experience scheme (SIWES) programme, and skills acquisition programme, use of model and computer simulations and cooperative training programed are relevant to the teaching of practical skills vocational education in Nigeria.

Themes unite the disciplines and blur the boundaries among them. The theme of the week acts as a magnet for all the teaching/learning activities during that week. 'A fertile theme is webbed to curriculum contents and disciplines or subjects use the theme to sift out appropriate concepts, topics or ideas' (Fogarty 1991). Focusing on 'themes 'enables teachers to meaningfully link different disciplines so that students will see the 'big' picture and appreciate the relevance of learning to their future practice. Choose the themes carefully as they will also determine the sequence of teaching/learning sessions. The theme for the first week should reflect the topics that need to be covered in the early part of the module. The flow of the topics should be logical and each new topic should build on the previous knowledge. Some of the topics are best taught in joint sessions or symposia not only to avoid overlap and duplication, but also for integration. The teaching/learning methods also need to be consistent with the learning outcomes. If at the end of the module the student is expected to perform certain procedures, then he/she should be given the opportunity to practice those procedures. The contents covered in small group sessions or self-study should not be repeated in lecture method. Appropriate time needs to be allocated for each teaching/learning session. A lecture should not be given more than



1 hour including generous time for question/answer session. The student-centered teaching/learning sessions should be given generous time so that students have enough time to thoroughly go through the topic.

According to McAleer (2001) what is assessed and which methods are used will play a significant part in what is learnt and how it is learnt. The success of integrated curriculum depends on the implementation of integrated assessment. Having mismatch between teaching/learning strategies and assessment methodologies is an effective recipe for failure of implementation of any curriculum. Plan the assessment at the same time while preparing the integrated modules. The assessment tools must adequately test the achievement of desired outcomes. Use assessment tools that assess the higher levels of cognition, such as understanding, comprehension, interpretation, analysis and decision making skills rather than simple recall of knowledge. Integrate assessment to reflect integrated curriculum. The examination questions should be constructed by a group of lecturers representing different contributing disciplines.

Willingness to accept the shortcomings in the curriculum or its implementation and to make the appropriate changes should be an ongoing process. Draw a plan for re-evaluation of the curriculum and design a mechanism to institute changes if required. The re-evaluation may be based on students' and staff feedback at regular intervals, external examiner comments and students performance in assessment exercises. It is crucial to have a proper mechanism or standard operative procedure of making any change in the curriculum. The changes should not be made on ad hoc basis and must be approved by the Curriculum Committee before implementation. The change and its basis should be recorded for future reference. Although the move towards adopting integrated curriculum is gathering momentum world-wide, there are several schools that are still unaware of this movement or finding it hard to make the change. Interpretation of 'integration' varies in different institutions and among individuals; however, knowledge about the different levels of integration and steps for developing an integrated curriculum will make it easier to make the change. The process of change will be relatively difficult in institutions with established curricula mainly, because it needs to change the mindset of the faculty. The training of faculty through discussions and workshops should be an initial step in this situation.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, the reportorial profession which is a subset of the secretarial branch of business education is in imminent danger of extinction. While international journals



report that the reportorial profession is alive and healthy the same cannot be said of the situation in Nigeria. With the recent trends in technological development and the use of modern office equipment which has become the norms for all offices, the reportorial profession has not attained the level of indispensability in Nigeria as claimed by these foreign textbooks. The country does not have enough qualified Verbatim Reporters which are needed in the three arms of government for employment. Experience has shown that Publication department which is one of the two core departments in the Legislative Houses is in very short supply of requisite manpower. The certificates in verbatim reporting awarded by the Federal Training Centres is not as valuable as a degree certificates. That is why a verbatim reporting certificate holder have their terminal point as grade level 14 in the Civil Service salary structure as against a degree holder who can reach level 17. This is the main reason why secretaries are not willing to go for reportorial course in Federal training Centres any longer, if immediate and effective solution is not provided, within the next few years, this vital cadre will become extinct. It therefore become worrisome that in the computer age as described above, a critical profession, Verbatim Reporting, which shall be a subset of Business Education is facing severe inadequate manpower challenge despite the fact that Business Education programmes are run in various universities and polytechnics in the country. This in conjunction with the researcher's long standing experience and interest in the profession forms the basis for seeking to identify strategies, integrating verbatim reporting into business education curriculum in North-central Nigerian Universities.

Research Question

The following question was raised to guide the study:

What are the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education Curriculum in North-Central Nigerian Universities?

Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the responses of the stakeholders regarding the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education Curriculum in North-Central Nigerian Universities

Methods

The research design used for this study was descriptive survey. This is an approach that looks for relationship on the basis of which projections are based. The method is considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to make careful record of what was observed so that the researcher can analyze the information obtained from



a representative sample of the population and to describe situation as they exist with regard to strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into business education curriculum in North-central Universities, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all the verbatim reporters in all the Houses of Assembly in North-central States and all the business educators in all the North-Central Nigerian Universities they are 28 and 16 respectively totally 44. The sample for this study comprised of 19 Verbatim reporters across the North central States and 12 Business educators from Kwara State University, Malete, University of Ilorin and Alhikmah University, Ilorin randomly selected. A self-designed Questionnaire was administered to elicit information from the respondents.

Results

Research Question

What are the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education curriculum in North central Nigerian Universities?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education curriculum

S/N	List of Databases available for teaching and research	Mean	SD	Remark
1	ICT utilization	3.68	0.72	Strongly Agreed
2	Introducing part-time programmes for reporter on duty to upgrade their certificate	3.71	0.46	Strongly Agreed
3	Upgrade of instructional facilities.	3.61	0.50	Strongly Agreed
4	Unification between Business Education and verbatim reporting curriculum.	3.32	0.48	Agreed
5	Training for Business education lecturers in parliamentary reporting.	3.50	0.51	Strongly Agreed
6	Students and lecturers positive attitudes.	3.43	0.50	Agreed
7	Creating verbatim reporting for business education programme.	3.71	0.46	Strongly Agreed
8	Specialization on B.Sc Ed in business education Verbatim reporting option.	3.79	0.42	Strongly Agreed
9	Specialization on B.Sc Ed in Verbatim reporting.	3.36	0.62	Agreed
10	Introduction of special verbatim reporting subjects at 300 and 400 levels.	3.64	0.68	Strongly Agreed
11	Drawing a plan for re-evaluation of the curriculum to institute changes if required.	3.50	0.58	Strongly Agreed
12	Implementation of integrated assessment.	3.14	0.45	Agreed
13	A six-month practical parliamentary reporting during SIWES for Business education (Verbatim reporting option).	3.86	0.36	Strongly Agreed
Weighted Average		3.56	0.52	Strongly Agreed



Analysis of Results

Analysis of data in Table 1 revealed an average calculated mean of 3.56 and standard deviation of 0.53, it shows that all the constructs in table above are strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education curriculum. The Table showed that Business Education lecturers and verbatim reporters strongly agreed to all the 13 constructs with mean ranges from 3.32 to 3.86. All the thirteen constructs have standard deviation ranges from 0.36 to 0.72, which are below the fixed value of 1.96. This means that the responses of the respondents are not wide spread as it is close to the mean. This implied that all the constructs identified in Table 1 are strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education curriculum (Mean = 3.56, SD = 0.52).

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Business Education lecturers and verbatim reporters regarding the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education curriculum in North-central Nigerian Universities.

Table 2: Paired-Samples t-test result of mean difference between responses of Lecturers and verbatim reporters regarding the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education curriculum

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	Sig (2tailed)	Decision
Lecturers	12	3.53	0.42	-3.419	30	0.009	Not
Verbatim Reporters	19	3.91	0.09				Rejected

Source: Field survey, 2019

Table 2 revealed that Business Education lecturers had mean and standard deviation responses of 3.53 and 0.42, respectively, while verbatim reporters had mean and standard deviation responses of 3.91 and 0.09 respectively. The calculated value of t was -3.419 ($t_{30} = -3.419$). The observed p-value was 0.009 which is less than the fixed p-value of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that, there is no significant difference between the mean responses of Business Education lecturers and verbatim reporters regarding the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education curriculum in North-central Nigerian Universities, was rejected. Hence, the inference drawn was that business education lecturers and verbatim reporters did not differ significantly in their opinion on the strategies for



integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education curriculum in North-Central Nigerian Universities.

From Table 1 above, it could be seen that integration of verbatim reporting into business education programme has a Mean of 3.71 meaning that both the business educators and verbatim reporters are greatly in support of the integration. Also, introduction of part-time programme for the reporters on the job with a Mean of 3.71 received a mass support of both the business educators and verbatim reporters because of the inherent opportunities and advantages. Though, specialization of B.Sc Ed. Verbatim reporting has a Mean of 3.79 but with the latest policy on business education curriculum, this could not be possible rather verbatim reporting should be part of business education programme. A six month practical parliamentary reporting as SIWES for business education students with Mean of 3.86 received majority support from the verbatim reporters and the business educators alike, meaning that the strategy is germane for integration of verbatim reporting into business education programme in North central Nigerian, Universities.

Findings in Table 1 revealed that nine out of the thirteen questionnaire items were strongly agreed to with a weighted average of 3.56 while the rest four items were agreed to with a weighted average of 0.52. All things being equal, the analysis revealed that all the items were agreed to by both the Business educators and verbatim reporters as strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into business education programme in North Central Nigerian universities.

Findings from the hypothesis proved that the observed p-value was 0.009 which is less than the fixed p-value of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that, there is no significant difference between the mean responses of Business Education lecturers and verbatim reporters regarding the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into Business Education curriculum in North-central Nigerian Universities, was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding in relation to research purpose, question and hypothesis revealed that business educators and verbatim reporters in North Central Nigeria agreed to the strategies for integrating verbatim reporting into business education curriculum to be good strategies. The findings also revealed that there was significant difference between the mean ratings of business educators and verbatim reporters regarding the strategies of integrating verbatim reporting into business education curriculum which also shows that business educators demonstrated a high level of the extent of



desirability of the integration than the verbatim reporters based on their academic experience. This implies that adopting most of these strategies will bring about a successful integration of business education into business education curriculum thereby resulting to systematic reformation through upgrading of instructional facilities, improving teacher's competence, establishment of different working groups and exposing the business education graduates to practical parliamentary experience

These findings corroborate that of Bordbar (2018) who affirmed that teacher's competence is a major factor in integrating verbatim reporting into business education curriculum. Establishment of working groups with their responsibilities is another good strategy for a successful integration; Malik and Malik (2011) corroborated this when they remarked that it is vital to set up different working groups and define their responsibilities with each module having its own Integrated Committee (IC). Effective communication between the teachers and the students is another identifiable strategy. This corroborates the view of Kinsiz (2010) who stated that teaching strategies, for all practical purposes, mean the same thing. Regardless of what we call such processes, they are primarily descriptions of the leaning objective-oriented activities and flow of information between teachers and students. Practical parliamentary reporting during SIWES for business education students is another good strategy for a successful integration of verbatim reporting into business education programme.

Conclusion

The aims of integrating verbatim reporting subjects with business education programme is to engender positive attitudes to learning by fostering a climate of enquiry where ideas are respected and can be freely shared (Klein, 2009). For these to be possible, the teachers are expected to ensure that their lessons and/or activities have clear aims and purposes which are shared with the students, cater appropriately for the learning of students of differing abilities, interests and learning styles, have resources and learning tasks that are suitably differentiated to match individual learning needs, create and sustain students' interest and motivation and ensure the full participation of all class members.

Lecturers are encouraged to experiment with teaching techniques designed to enhance learning. Lesson planning includes clear learning objectives; success criteria; differentiated activities where appropriate and a planned plenary session to



discuss the content of the lesson, explore future possibilities, and provide time for reflection. The delivery of the curriculum is the immediate responsibility of the individual teacher (Gulbrandsen & Aanstad, 2015). If all the strategies highlighted among others could be adhered to, integration of verbatim reporting to business education programme will be successful.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward by the researcher:

Information Communication Technology (ICT) utilization must be intensified upon instead of shorthand as a strategy for successful integration of verbatim reporting into business education programme.

Introduction of a part-time programme for reporters on duty to upgrade their certificate is a welcome strategy for integration to take place.

Instructional facilities in the business education department must be upgraded to accommodate the integration of verbatim reporting into business education programme.

A six-months practical parliamentary reporting as SIWES for business education students will afford the students to have practical parliamentary experience before they graduate.

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