

# Gradual Release of Responsibility as a Tool for Effective Curriculum Delivery for Better Education Service in an Inclusive Setting in Secondary Schools in Bauchi State

<sup>1</sup>Iliyasu Umar Azare

<sup>2</sup>Muhammad Kawu Gabi

<sup>3</sup>Nasiru Gambo

<sup>1</sup>Curriculum and Instruction Department

<sup>2</sup> & <sup>3</sup>Department of Psychology

School of Education

Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare

DOI: 10.56201/ijee.v8.no4.2022.pg31.39

---

## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the use of gradual release of responsibility for effective curriculum delivery in an inclusive setting for better education service delivery in secondary schools in Bauchi state. It emphasizes the application and utilization of components of the gradual release of responsibility model in teaching and learning in an inclusive education. The paper also looks into Teaching strategies in form of gradual release of responsibility with strong vertical alignment and purposeful instruction, which pave way for the removal of the barrier that exist between the normal and special students in term of their performance in academia, gradual release of responsibility serves as a means for addressing such challenges, thereby allowing students in an inclusive education setting learn easily. The paper, however, laments that with vertical alignment of content and learning experience through Continuity and Sequence, students who find literacy and numeracy tasks difficult can learn and perform better, thereby concretizing their understanding as well as compete with normal students. The paper then suggests that Curriculum planners should make strong position in adopting strong vertical curriculum alignment and purposeful instruction (Gradual Release of Responsibility) in planning curriculum for inclusive education.*

---

**Keywords:** *Gradual release of responsibility, curriculum delivery, education, inclusive setting*

---

## Introduction

Education is a right of all human beings. As soon as a child is born, he inherits this right which is automatically fulfilled, whether well or poorly. The child-rearing practices of different societies point to the fulfilment of this right. Every society fulfils the child's right to education differently. In primitive societies, there was informal education. Today, education is both formal and informal. Some societies have practiced inclusive education practice, thereby making it tuition-free schooling at all levels of education. Some others have it at primary and secondary levels while others have it at the primary level only. (Yunusa,2008)

School is a social construct as it is established by the society to equip learners with competencies that will enable them contribute meaningfully to the society. This is why the goals of education reflect the needs, problems and aspirations of the society. In other words, schools exist because they help the society to adequately equip its youth with the expected competencies that will enable them function and contribute meaningfully to the economies of their communities. However, for the school to effectively and efficiently perform this social function a curriculum must be used, as it is through its instrumentality that the school can provide apt learning experiences to enable the learners develop the expected competencies. This is why the curriculum is seen as the heart and the soul of the school. It is on this premise that the curriculum is seen by many as a systematic arrangement of socially valued knowledge, values, attitude and competencies for a target audience by the school in order to enable them become functional members of their society. The school has a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and a clear reference for monitoring learning across the year levels. The plan, within which evidence-based teaching practices are embedded, and to which assessment and reporting procedures are aligned, has been developed with reference to the inclusive education practice or other approved curriculum and refined collaboratively to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice. (Fink & Samuels, 2008).

## Concept of Inclusive Education

Inclusion in education refers to a model wherein students with special needs spend most or all of their time with non-special (general education) needs students. It arises in the context of special education with an individualized education program, and is built on the notion that it is more effective for students with special needs to have said mixed experience for them to be more successful in social interactions leading to further success in life, (Gali, S. 2014)

Inclusion rejects but still provides the use of special schools or classrooms to separate students with disabilities from students without disabilities. Schools with inclusive classrooms do not believe in separate classrooms. They do not have their own separate world so they have to learn how to operate with students while being less focused on by teachers due to a higher student to teacher ratio. Implementation of these practices varies. Schools most frequently use the inclusion model for selected students with mild to moderate special needs. This can be in the following categories:

1. Fully inclusive schools, which are rare, do not separate "general education" and "special education" programs; instead, the school is restructured so that all students learn together.

2. Inclusive education differs from the 'integration' or 'mainstreaming' model of education, which tend to be concerned principally with disability and special educational needs, and learners changing or becoming 'ready for' or deserving of accommodation by the mainstream. By contrast, inclusion is about the child's right to participate and the school's duty to accept the child.

A premium is placed upon full participation by students with disabilities and upon respect for their social, civil, and educational rights. Feeling included is not limited to physical and cognitive disabilities, but also includes the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and of other forms of human differences.

3. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett wrote, "Student performance and behaviour in educational tasks can be profoundly affected by the way we feel, we are seen and judged by others. When we expect to be viewed as inferior, our abilities seem to diminish".
4. This is why the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal recognizes the need for adequate physical infrastructures and the need for safe, inclusive learning environment. Inclusive education is a relatively controversial topic for many parents and educators. The idea behind inclusive education is that students with special needs will be placed in the same classroom environment as other students their age who do not have special needs.

Inclusion is therefore defined as the state or a process of addressing and responding positively to the diversities that exist among the students, through modifying and changing the education systems, to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, socio-emotional, and intellectual and other types of conditions. These modifications and changes involve content, teaching methods, teaching and learning materials, organization of the classrooms and infrastructural adjustments. Inclusion calls upon the educators, professionals and authorities to see learning diversities among the students not as a problem but as a catalyst towards enriching the educational support (UNESCO, 2001).

Gali S. cited in (National Centre on educational restructuring and inclusion 1995), Inclusive education means: "Providing to all students, including those with significant disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with the needed supplementary aids and support services, in age appropriate classrooms, in order to prepare students for productive lives as full members of society.

Inclusion is geared in the provision of education that is anchored in improving the education systems that will benefit all children regardless of their differences or difficulties. Inclusion is concerned with provision of appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learners in the education settings (UNESCO, 2001).

Inclusion seems to be important, because studies show improvement in academic performance for students with disability in inclusive settings as compared to special education settings. Also, all children need to build friendships and relationships, respect and understanding of each other, so that they are prepared to be responsible members of the community, inclusion provides this opportunity (Salisbury, 2008).

## **Inclusive Classroom**

Na-ta'ala G.B cited Isaiah (2000) who quoted Stainback and Stainback (1992) who defined inclusive school/classroom as a place where everyone belongs, is accepted and supported by his/her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his/her educational needs met. The Michigan department of education (1992) defined inclusive education as the provision of educational services for students with disabilities in the school where non handicapped peers attend, in an age appropriate, general education classes directly supervised by the regular teacher but with support and assistance from professionals in special education. This emphasizes the fact it is all about teaching special needs students in a regular neighbour school.

This means that inclusive classroom is the class/school where non handicapped peers attend, in an age appropriate, general education classes directly supervised by the regular teacher but with support and assistance from professionals in special education.

## **Curriculum Delivery**

Curriculum delivery entails putting in to practice the official blueprint that has been planned and developed by potential adopting units. Curriculum delivery is the actual carrying out of government policies and changes spelt out in prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects in to classroom situation. It is one of the curriculum processes that are carried out in practical form. Here, the focus is on the teachers who are the main implementers, although there are external agencies who are involved in the implementation process. Curriculum delivery simply refers to how the officially designed course of study is translated by the teacher in to syllabuses, scheme of work and lessons to be delivered to students. (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).

## **Curriculum Instructional Delivery in an Inclusive Education Setting**

There are various strategies, and techniques for teaching. The use of a variety of instructional methods is necessary for effective and efficient curriculum delivery in an inclusive setting. A competent, professional as well as an efficient teacher should therefore always device different ways of facilitating the process of learning. The method or approach is very vital in any teaching and learning situation (curriculum implementation). The way a teacher presents the subject matter will make students like or dislike the subject. Appropriate methods of teaching are very vital for curriculum to be productive. The method that a teacher uses has potentials of promoting or hindering learning. (Yunusa, 2008)

Teachers should always make sure that the choice of teaching method (s) employed in an inclusive setting suit the age, class or level, characteristic and number of learners, the nature of instructional objectives and available curriculum materials and resources. (Kong & Pearson, 2003).

## **Criteria for the Selection of Instructional Methods**

The following criteria found to be useful in the selection of instructional method in an inclusive educational setting as suggested by Yusuf, 2012:

1. Instructional methods should be selected based on the type of instructional objectives that are expected to be achieved. Objectives set at the psychomotor and cognitive domains

will require learner-centered teaching methods such as discussion, discovery, play way and assignment.

2. Cost implications: Some methods are more expensive than others. The method selected should not be so expensive that both the teacher and the student cannot meet the cost.
3. The Subject to be taught: Demonstration and experimentation methods are appropriate for the science subjects.
4. The size and number of students: Discussion method is appropriate for small group of students but inappropriate for a class of more than 500. If the class is large the teacher needs teaching methods that can cater for the interest and needs of all the students in the class.
5. The time available for the teacher to cover the scheme of work or course outline: Many teachers opt for lecture method when they have limited time to cover course outline. In addition, single period lesson requires preparation and approach that are different from a double period lesson.
6. Media and materials available: There are some teaching methods that may require instructional materials for effectiveness. Example, a Home economics teacher cannot embark on using demonstration without the required equipment and ingredients.
7. Other characteristics such as interest, age, class, intellectual capacity and background of the learner play a great role in the selection of instructional method for proper curriculum implementation.

### **Gradual Release of Responsibility as an Instrument for Effective Curriculum Delivery in an Inclusive Education Setting**

Better education service in an inclusive setting, requires an effective curriculum delivery, a common way that teachers can do this is to use a gradual release of responsibility method (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The gradual release of responsibility model of instruction requires that the teacher shift from assuming “all the responsibility for performing a task ... to a situation in which the students assume all of the responsibility”. This gradual release may occur over a day, a week, a month, or a year. Stated in another way, the gradual release of responsibility “... emphasizes instruction that mentors’ students into becoming capable thinkers and learners when handling the tasks with which they have not yet developed expertise” (Duke & Pearson, 2002).

The gradual release of responsibility model of instruction has been documented as an effective approach for improving literacy and numeracy achievement among learners (Fisher & Frey, 2007), **Components of the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model**

There are four interactive (or interrelated) components of a gradual release of responsibility model. These are: Focus Lessons, Guided Instruction, Collaborative Learning and Independent work.

- Focus Lessons. This component allows the teacher to model his or her thinking and understanding of the content for students. Usually brief in nature, focus lessons establish the purpose or intended learning outcome and clue students into the standards they are learning. In addition to the purpose and the teacher model, the focus lesson provides teachers and opportunity to build and/or activate background knowledge.

- **Guided Instruction.** During guided instruction, teachers prompt, question, facilitate, or lead students through tasks that increase their understanding of the content. While this can, and sometimes does, occur with the whole class, the evidence is clear that reading instruction necessitates small group instruction. Guided instruction provides teachers an opportunity to address needs identified on formative assessments and directly instruct students in specific literacy components, skills, or strategies.
- **Collaborative Learning.** To consolidate their understanding of the content, students need opportunities to problem solve, discuss, negotiate, and think with their peers. Collaborative learning opportunities, such as workstations ensure that students practice and apply their learning while interacting with their peers. This phase is critical as students must use language if they are to learn it. The key to collaborative learning, or productive group work as it is sometimes called, lies in the nature of the task. Ideally each collaborative learning task will have a group function combined with a way to ensure individual accountability such that the teacher knows what each student did while at the workstation.
- **Independent work.** As the goal of all of our instruction, independent learning provides students practice with applying information in new ways. In doing so, students synthesize information, transform ideas, and solidify their understanding.

Importantly, the gradual release of responsibility model is not linear. Students move back and forward between each of the components as they master skills, strategies, and standards. How is the Gradual Release of Responsibility Used? The gradual release of responsibility model provides teachers with an instructional framework for moving from teacher knowledge to student understanding and application. The gradual release of responsibility model ensures that students are supported in their acquisition of the skills and strategies necessary for success. (James, 2006)

Implementing the gradual release of responsibility model requires time. Instructional planning can consume hours of a teacher's time. As teachers, we have to plan for a diverse group of learners, students learning English, students who find reading easy and those who struggle, and students who need strategic intervention to be successful. As part of a gradual release of responsibility model, curriculum must be vertically aligned. Our students do not have time to waste on skills and strategies they have already mastered. Similarly, without strong vertical alignment as part of the gradual release of responsibility model, skills can be missed. (James, 2006)

### **Vertical Alignment of Content and Learning Experience**

This refers to the selection and systematic arrangement of content and learning experiences within one subject area or discipline so that what follows has relationship with the preceding one and is slightly deeper and more complex than the previous task. Example the content and learning experiences of JSS I social studies being related to that of JSS II social studies; JSII English Language related to that of JS III English Language; SS I mathematics being related to SSII mathematics. There are two major criteria for effective vertical alignment of content and learning experience, these are; Continuity and Sequence

**Continuity:** The criterion of continuity implied that the major curriculum elements are made to occur again and again (or several times). Thus, if an important objective or concept has been identified in a subject area, learners should be provided with recurring and continuing opportunities to practice and experience what will enable them achieve the objective or have a meaningful understanding of the concept. If for instance, the curriculum requires learners to acquire or develop the skill in reading a variety of books, then opportunities should be provided continuously at different stages of curriculum implementation for them to develop the skill. If experiences of similar nature are brought into continual operation, they will very likely produce a cumulative effect that will bring about profound changes in the learners.

**Sequence:** The criterion of sequence has to do with a process of building upon the preceding concept in a broader and deeper manner. It deals with progressive development of understanding, skill, attitude etc. to establish a sequence in a curriculum will demand arranging or putting the content and materials into a kind of order of succession. Sequence emphasizes the importance of having each successive learning experience build upon the preceding one and also go more broadly and deeply. This criterion, implies continuity as well as progression from lower to the higher levels of treatment of curriculum elements. Below are some general principles that are considered relevant in planning any learning sequence; Chronological, going from known to unknown, moving from the simple to the complex, moving from concrete objects and experiences to the development of abstract concepts and generalizations. (Umaru, 2011)

## **Conclusion**

The study explained the concepts of inclusive education, inclusive classroom, Curriculum and instructional delivery, criteria for the selection of instructional strategies, gradual release of responsibility as an instrument for an effective curriculum delivery in an inclusive education setting, components of the gradual release of responsibility model, as well as vertical alignment of content and learning experience.

In an attempt to do away with the barrier that exist between the normal and special students in term of their performance in academia, gradual release of responsibility serves as a means for addressing such challenges. As point out in the paper, teaching strategies in form of gradual release of responsibility with strong vertical alignment and purposeful instruction, students in an inclusive education setting learn easily. While there are many reasons that student in an inclusive education setting struggle with reading, writing and arithmetic (literacy and numeracy tasks difficult), the paper has trumpet a laudable proposal that if successfully used could facilitate tremendous re-energization of our teachers, if we provide them with technique and strategies of gradual release of responsibility model.

For professional teachers to properly discharge their responsibilities, there is need to overhaul the strategies and techniques of teaching especially at an inclusive education setting so as to with stand the emerging trends in the application of gradual release of responsibility model.

## Recommendations

It is suggested that,

1. Curriculum planner should make strong position in adopting strong vertical curriculum alignment and purposeful instruction (Gradual Release of Responsibility) in planning curriculum for inclusive education.
2. Government should employ Qualified and trained teachers to handle the inclusive education setting for its uniqueness, so that students should be able to comprehend the planned curriculum.
3. School managers and teachers should stickily adopt the use of Gradual Release of Responsibility model in delivering curriculum in an inclusive setting as the matter of facts that will make recall and retention of what has been learned by the students.
4. Government and the Non-governmental organization should on regular interval organize workshop, conferences and seminars for special needs staff and/or trained the regular teachers available to improve the standard of Co-teaching in an inclusive education setting.
5. Publishers and text book authors should endeavor to produce materials that are in line with the curriculum that is purposefully planned and produce for an inclusive education setting.
6. Government at all levels should partner with NGOs and other agencies on the need to enlighten the parent and general public on the relevance of inclusive education as well as integrating their relationship with the teachers of their children for common goals (better educational service for all).
7. Government should provide sufficient fund to the schools so that they should afford materials and equipment for them to meet the demand for utilizing purposeful instruction (Gradual Release of Responsibility), in an inclusive education setting.

## References

- Audu, U. F. (2011), *Curriculum Development for modern Africa (Theory and Practice)*. De-New creation Publishing House Ltd. Kaduna, Nigeria
- Duke, N. K. & Pearson, P. D. (2002). "Effective Practices for Developing Reading Comprehension," in A. E. Farstrup & S. J. Samuels (eds.), *What Research has to Say About Reading Instruction*, International Reading Association, Newark, Delaware
- Eklindh & Van den Brule-Balescut (2006) *Ensure access and provision of education to all marginalized groups including children with disabilities*.
- Fink, R. and S. J. Samuels (eds.), *Inspiring Reading Success: Interest and Motivation in an Age of High-Stakes Testing*, International Reading Association, Newark, Delaware, 2008.



- Fisher, D. and N. Frey, "Implementing a School Wide Literacy Framework: Improving Achievement in an Urban Elementary School," *The Reading Teacher*, 61, 2007, pp. 32-45.
- Fisher, D. and N. Frey, *Better Learning Through Structured Teaching: A Framework for the Gradual Release of Responsibility*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia, 2008.
- Frey, N. and D. Fisher, *Language Arts Workshop: Purposeful Reading and Writing Instruction*, Merrill Education, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 2006.
- Gali, S. (2014). Empowering excluded children in Nigeria through inclusive Education: Role of Rehabilitation Counselors in Nigeria. *National Journal of Special Needs Education (NJSNE)*. vol.(1)1, p85-92
- James, A. N (2006): *Issues in Curriculum Development*. T. Richard Lagos, Nigeria
- Na-ta'ala, G.B (2012). Inclusive education in perspective. *Readings in Special Education*. p298-306.
- Pearson, P. D. and M. C. Gallagher, "The Instruction of Reading Comprehension," *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 8, 1983, pp. 317-344.
- UNESCO (2001). *Understanding and Responding to Children Needs in Inclusive Classrooms: A guide for Teachers*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Yunusa M. B (2008): *Issues on Curriculum*: Yag Enterprise, Zaria, Nigeria
- Yusuf, H. O (2012): *Fundamentals of Curriculum and Instruction*: Joyce Graphic Printing & publishers Kaduna, Nigeria