INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES IN ECONOMICS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.

OGBUEGHU SYLVESTER NWIGWE (Ph.D)
Social Science Education Department,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
Sylvester.ogbueghu@unn.edu.ng
+2348037464339.

&

ISAAC OKEK UGWU
Department of Economics
University of Nigeria
Nsukka.

ABSTRACT:
The growth of technological development and the world global village demanded innovations and changes in the methods and strategies for teaching and learning in our educational system. Economics Education which has its domain in a dynamic society requires constant innovations in its method of instruction. This paper reviewed the concept of innovation, the general purpose of innovation in education, problems of innovation and discussed innovations on teaching methods in economics education. Some innovative methods in economics education were briefly mentioned and discussed such as quantitative techniques, computer—assisted instruction method, massive open online course method [MOOC], field trip, industrial work base experience, forecasting models, team teaching, individualised instruction and micro teaching technique etc. Conclusion was drawn that innovations and changes in teaching and learning methodologies remain imperative in the educational development and growth of a nation. Recommendations were also made such as: to ensure innovations at all levels of education, to make it affordable, functional, to train and re-train more teachers to ensure the changes and making some quantitative courses compulsory to the undergraduate students of economic education.

INTRODUCTION:
Developments in education as in other spheres of life are closely associated with innovation of some sort. Prior to the introduction of formal education in most parts of the developing world, indigenous education existed and served the needs of people to a greater or lesser extent. As time progressed, with increasing sophistication of human society and technological improvement, people appreciated the need for an improved lifestyle, learning and understanding. This need called for the introduction of a number of changes in the pattern of peoples’ thought, need and other practices (mkpa,2006).

With the introduction of formal education, the trend towards the progressive modification of learning programmes and materials continued. Ideas, programmes, materials, method and policies considered inadequate for the felt needs of the time were modified or often times totally replaced with more useful ones in a bid to achieve an improved quality of education. The underlying rationale is that if the things of the present are not satisfying the needs of the present, improved and workable strategies must be sought to ensure improved conditions.

These innovative strategies are necessary in addressing the following concerns; what shapes the decisions of individuals and families to invest in education? How do families choose between types of schools? Are private returns to education shaped by the number of years an individual spends in school or by the type of skill acquired while in school? Why should government devote scarce public resources to finance education? What are the social pecuniary and non-pecuniary returns to education? What motivates teachers to put in effort towards improving student learning? How can schools be held accountable to education outcomes? And so on. The discipline of education economics provides an indispensable framework for addressing these questions and many other critical issues faced by curriculum planners and policy makers.
It is in view of the enormous contributions of the economists and the economic educators that made the World Bank in June 2016 to organise economics of education group to help to improve among bank staff as well as clients and other development partner, knowledge of what shapes education outcomes and results to better understand how to strengthen the linkages of the education system with the labour market; and to build and support a network of economists, and specialists who are interesting in collectively addressing the challenges of education sector.

Beli (1998) stated that series of brain storming have been going on in both developed and developing countries of the world of which, most of them came out with many innovations and strategies of instructions in economic education like other disciplines. Most of these innovations and strategies bother on concretizing teaching of economic concepts and phenomena, and improve the method of analyses of the relationship between variables of economics and education for reliability of results.

A conference on the development in economics education held in the university of birmingham on 10th of November 2015, was an interactive workshop which introduced new and innovative ideas on teaching and learning methods, on the economics curriculum and students engagement. The extensively discussed and came up with the following innovations and strategies.

1. Online resources approach
2. Advanced quantitative methods in economics
3. Effective feedback
4. Using social media in teaching, and publishing in economics education
5. Encourage peer learning
6. Self assessment method
7. Flipped classroom. (for sudden improvement)

Teachers and the great economic debaters met in 2014 in the north Carolina university basically to find solutions to the challenges in economics education and came up with massive open online course (MOOC) education strategy. They also recommended career ladder and retraining/rebranding of teachers.

Daniel frankline, Executive editor of “the economist” came up with a question on what should be done for improvement on economics education and came up with the following strategies:
1. Less emphasis on theory and more on evidence.
2. Improvement in the quality and range of economics data available
3. More teaching of economics through a historical lens and more links between economies.

THE CONCEPT OF INNOVATION
Innovation is to create or initiate something new, which clearly deviates from the traditional practices which have been followed for a long conventional time to impart education at all levels. That concept, innovation in this paper refers to ideas or practices that are new within the context of the school in order to impart the subject matter of economics. To Ajibola (2008), innovation is an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. To be explicit, he posited that innovation involves newly introduced method, custom, device or change in the way of doing different things. Nzeako and Onwuama (2010), saw innovation as the introduction of a novel factor perceived as new by a given school and community supported by a driving force and implemented as a practical advance that deviates from established or traditional forms. In the view of Mintron (2000) in Nzeako and Onwuama (2010), innovation is a technology which improves educational outcomes, improves working relationships or processes within the school system or reduces the cost of education without significantly reducing the quality of desired ones. However, an innovation seeks to transform or alter a condition of practice which is known to be somewhat deficient and to introduce something better that accommodates the identified deficiency in order to achieve better result or for increased productivity.

PURPOSE OF INNOVATION IN ECONOMICS EDUCATION
Nigerian’s educational system has witnessed a number of innovations and changes whose purposes are:
1. To ensure that what we teach is relevant to the aims and objectives of our students, the values of our culture and the resources at our disposal; To create the awareness that knowledge changes in response to books we read, discoveries we make or experiences we have; To prove that education is dynamic, it changes along with time and society; To enable country/society discover unique system suitable for particular needs and aspirations; and to develop educational rethinking structures so as to make ideas more complete, active and concrete (Mkpa,2006:133.). Economics education as a discipline has gone through series of metamorphosis to this point of decision where its inductive and deductive reasoning/data analysis are highly quantified for accurate and reliable economic and education policies.
To avoid reducing learning and teaching to the development of mechanical skill, the nature of economics and the goals of economics education are first laid out. There must be the existence of shared narrative to provide an inspired reason for education (Potman:1995). Like all academic discipline, economics and economics education have a specialized linguistic structure that produces distinct ways of thinking. These distinct models of thought are embodied in the models used, and in the ways these elements of reality that the methodology of economics can adequately identify claims. (Robbins 1952)

The general objectives of innovations in economics education were supported by the UNICEF joint committee for economic education in 2010, when it stated that the aim of economics education is to think in an economics way, and to provide students with an adequate knowledge and understanding of the tools of economics situation and the problems to which the tools are applied. Innovation is necessary then to translate into assessment objectives of skills to be tested, knowledge and understanding, analysis, application, interpretation, evaluation and presentation of economic and education facts.

INNOVATIONS ON TEACHING METHODS IN ECONOMICS EDUCATION
A lot of innovations have been made on teaching methods so as to improve the teaching and learning process, that can motivate learners, improve understanding and retention, enhance creativity, instil more knowledge, skills and affection for learning. The newly innovative teaching methods embraced these three main domains in teaching and learning namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. The instructional strategies in economics education that will enhance learning and teaching under these domains are discussed thus:

QUANTITATIVE MODELS/TECHNIQUES:
Economics education basically study, analyse and interpret two set of variables, namely economics and education variables. These variables could be endogenous or exogenous, homogenous or heterogeneous, independent or dependent, predictor or criterion variable and so on. The analysis of these variables in order to determine their relationship require the use of advanced mathematical and statistical tools rather than a mere descriptive statistical tools, for accurate and reliable results. This is a shift from verbal description to quantitative analysis for easy comprehensibility.

Ogbueghu (2004), completely agreed with this view, and went on to outline some of the quantitative techniques which is very necessary for a good teacher of economics education. These techniques include; First and second differential calculus \((dY/dOX)\) for analysis of marginal and optimum productivity concepts

a. Matrix models for input-output analysis

b. Multiple regression analysis to determine the relationship between variables.

Koutsoyinnis (2008) stated that for a teacher to impart the subject matter of economics affectively, he must be skilled in the advanced qualitative techniques hence recommend an algebraic method for economics and economics education.

COMPUTER – ASSISTED INSTRUCTION IN ECONOMICS EDUCATION (CAI): Computer assisted instruction is an instructional relatively newly designed method of teaching where a computer systems deliver instruction directly to learners by allowing them to interact with designed lessons that have been programmed into the system, Eleoba (2004). The CAI was first developed in America (USA) in 1919 by Patrick suppes of Stanford University. Through this method, different gadgets (soft & hard wares) are developed to aid in teaching and learning and analysis of data. This paper identified and discussed the cognitive opportunities and limitations of information communication technology (ICT) in addressing the challenges of learning and teaching economics. It considered the situation of ICT in a learning environment that support learners’ autonomy, and provide students with access to economics discipline. Teaching and learning activities have to be planned and organised to ensure continuity between ICT and non ICT lessons.

This is done through the employment of ICT and non ICT tools to provide support for one another and the interaction between the tools and course participants. It is only then that students especially in the introductory economics courses are likely to think, “in an economics way.” Studies on ICT in economics education have shown that ICT facilitates the acquisition of important cognitive skills required for effective economic analysis and evaluation. It provides the cognitive scaffolding for students to acquire complex concepts and understanding the connection between them. Scherage(1986), Smith and smith (1989) were in support of the above accretion. They also agreed that it allows teachers and students to communicate both their thoughts and interest in the subject matter and offers a better match to students learning style. Lage etal (2000) also echoed thus: More over it is a medium through which students can observe the real life implications of economics theories, (Lumsden and scott 1988).
Postman (1995) stated that ICT is no longer misunderstood as only giving people greater access to more information, faster, more conveniently but in more diverse forms (Craig, 1996). It is easy but inaccurate to describe the future of education in terms of hardware, or software, boxes and wires, and cautioned that before you become embraced with gorgeous gadgets and mesmerising video displays, be reminded that information is knowledge and knowledge is not wisdom, and wisdom is not foresight. Each grows out of each other and we need them all.

ICT makes the learning of economics by students’ access to the academic environment in the following:
- Visualisation and animation
- Cognitive scaffolding
- Immediate feedback
- Relevance to real life situations
- Dialogic dimension of learning

Typical example of such computer models of instruction is Laurillard’s conversation framework which has the following four components in the dialogue namely; discussion, interaction, adaption and reflection which are used mostly in dialogic dimension of learning.

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MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE (MOOC): This innovation came out after the conference of teachers and economic debaters in North Carolina University in 2014. This strategy focuses on Online and distant learning. It stresses on the quality of teachers to impart the subject matter of economics and the quality of economic teachers to be produced. Beli (2015) stated the aim of this strategy to include; i) clarify the economic importance of and key influences on developing, retraining, and supporting the world class teaching in our communities. ii) Develop plans unique to our community. iii) Know where to apply funds to implement our plans. The proponents of this strategy noted that in terms of students achievement, only few topics in education captured as much attention from the policy makers, curriculum planners practitioners, and business leaders as the impact of teachers quality on students achievement. This entails that the economics education teachers trainees should be properly trained and equipped with varied instructional procedure. Here information should be properly disseminated as regard instructional procedure and materials.

FIELD TRIP INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD AND INDUSTRIAL ATTACHMENT: Field trips are excursion outside the classroom to study real processes, people and object which often grow out of students
need for first hand experiences (Nleya, 2006]. Field trip is a method of teaching economics education which involves taking students out to the field to have first-hand knowledge of what happens in the natural environment and such experiences cannot be within the classroom. There is no laboratory for controlled experiment in economics/economics education, so field trip and work experience help to make lesson concrete.

Knowledge about issues are more meaningful when learners visit affected sites than classroom discussion only.

FORECASTING INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL: This is a model of instruction that bases on futuristic predictions of consequences of subject matter, content, problems, actions, choices, decisions etc. on today’s prevailing consequences. The future consequences are in levels according to their degree of seriousness and less important. It makes for rational, reflective thinking aimed at averting dangerous or negative consequences. Again it prepares learners today to contain their problems in future. Ogbueghu (2004) stated that the knowledge of forecasting techniques equip learners to avert future risks, or negative tendencies and to have accurate plan in life endeavours. This innovative forecasting model of instruction employs the following system:

- Learner programming
- Games theory
- Queue theory
- Decision making under uncertainty or risk
- NET present value mode (helps in feasibility studies)

TEAM TEACHING: team teaching is a process involving two or more teachers who closely work together in planning, teaching and evaluate the learning experiences of group of students or a large group of learners. According to mbakwem (2001), team teaching is a formalized arrangement whereby two or more teachers cooperatively work together in jointly planning, implementing and evaluating instruction of a large number of students or learners. In essence, team teaching is focused on large group of learners, taken minimum of two professionals, has joint planning, teaching and evaluations etc. This gives room for the teachers to teach the aspect of economics and education where he specialized. In this method no single teacher is capable of influencing student performance in evaluating process.

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION: This is a very important instructional innovation that recognizes the differences among learners in a learning setting due to differences in the learners’ interests, needs, socioeconomic background, environments and goals. According to Mkpa (1987), this individualized instruction tailors the teaching/learning process to meet the differences in the learners so as to enable him/her pursue his own learning. Teacher in his method gives individual attention, gives assignment when and where necessary and a fellow up, hence carrying the whole class along. Meaningful individualized instruction exposes learners to a wide variety of instructional materials and resources as well as makes for the learner’s increased involvement. It gives the learner autonomy in the process.

MICRO-TEACHING TECHNIQUE: Micro-teaching is a professional training exposure where student-teachers in micro-lesson\ in-house in the training college, check out or practice the teaching skills they have learnt on a few of their fellow trainees and in the presence of their teachers or supervisors for the purposes of fishing out their weaknesses and correcting them and improving on its strengths in advances for actual teaching.

Adeyemi (1992) and Allen (2014) were of the opinion that micro-teaching is an organized teaching improvement technique where the experimental teacher teaches a small group of audience (peers) which is recorded for review after each teaching section. The teacher reviews the recorded tape/disc, makes corrections where necessary, improves and reteach until the desired result is achieved or learned.

PROBLEMS OF INNOVATION IN EDUCATION
The problems of innovation include: affordability, implementation, functionality, evaluation etc. Mkpa (2006) and Iwu (2006) stated that an innovation becomes useful to the extent that it can be adopted in a school, this means its cost prohibitive. If a school resolve to introduce the use of computer in the teaching of certain subjects but discovers that it cannot procure even one on the account of the cost such an innovation
would certainly not work. If there are no qualified staff or computer operators and power available to the school, then the said innovation is unlikely to succeed.

The problem of implementation emerges as a result of shortage of teaching equipment, under-qualified teachers, overcrowded classes etc. evidence abound where some teachers with fresh, creative and imaginative ideas experience serious frustration with their seniors when trying to implement new methods. This reason is that older teachers still hold tenaciously to old methods as such become resentful of any kind of change. Adaption to change is always difficult as a popular saying goes but rewarding if embarked upon.

CONCLUSION
As variety and variation are spices of life, so also are the innovative methods or strategies in teaching and learning process in educational system ‘the key’ for improvement in learning. The need for innovation remains indispensable in the nation’s race for technological development and change no doubt remains permanent.

RECOMMENDATION
The following recommendations were made thus:
1. Government should ensure innovations at all levels of education.
2. Teachers need to be trained and retrained so as to keep abreast with the innovation since they cannot give what they don’t have.
3. An innovation system to be adopted or adapted by the school system must be functional, affordable, oriented to the needs of learner’s and must be periodically evaluated to confirm that the desired objectives are being achieved.
4. Introductory Quantitative courses like maths 101, 102 stat 111 & 112 etc should be made compulsory for the first year economics education students because their career may not end in the classroom.
5. In the faculties of education in Nigeria universities, economics education students should be allowed to use econometrics models in their research methodology. This is in line with the innovations in economics education.
REFERENCES