



Towards a Democratic Algerian Curriculum Development through Secondary School EFL Teachers' Involvement

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Abstract

This paper seeks to recommend a democratic model to curriculum development in Algeria that involves teachers by combining top-down government directives with bottom-up teachers-based creativities. More explicitly, the paper aims at exploring and identifying perceptions of secondary school EFL teachers' on their implementation of 2003 curriculum reform. The paper also aims at revealing barriers to their autonomy and involvement in curriculum development in order to pave the way for an understanding and planning towards such involvement. The critical paradigm was the conceptual framework guiding the research with data availed through a questionnaire for teachers and interviews with EFL secondary education inspectors. The findings advocated the existence of imbalanced power relation between the government and teachers with the former controlling and dictating curriculum, and excluding teachers from the whole developmental process.

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1. Introduction

Post to independence in 1962, education and training of citizens in Algeria has become a consistently high priority for the government. As a result, the country lived a series of different education reforms. The most significant reform was that of Higher Education in 1971. This latter reform was characterised by a change of teaching and learning methods, assessment modes, teaching contents, and management of universities to better respond to the country's needs. This reform was replaced by another innovation in 1999 due to the total dependence of the former reform on political power, a non-successful top-down feature that was inherited from the French colonial system (Saad,

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Zawdi, Derbal & Lee, 2005). The 1999 reform aimed to support the Algerian transition from a centralised to a free market economy. In addition, the reform prompted revision of the role of universities as regards provision of science and technology through teaching and research activities in an attempt to challenge globalisation (Saad et al., 2005). The 1999 reform revolved around three main themes: democratisation, Arabisation and Algerianisation, plus a return to the faculty system (Inter-ministerial Order of August 03, 1999). The democratisation of the Algerian university aimed at ensuring a free education for all Algerian students. The Arabisation and Algerianisation of the university system involved a progressive replacement of French by Arabic as a medium of instruction. Curricula revision and adaptation of teaching methods to the country's needs subsequently took place.

Currently the Algerian tertiary education framework is following the French uniform structure of degrees, which is known as the License-Master-Doctorate (LMD) system. This reform came into being since 2004 (Executive Decree N° 04-371 of November 21, 2004) and was designed to align Algerian Higher Education with international standards. The 2004 reform aims at promoting students' mobility, providing them with the knowledge, skills and competencies required for the labour market, and lifelong learning (Saad et al., 2005).

Parallel reforms were also enacted in basic education. The first basic education reform, so-called the fundamental school was applied in 1976. The reform targeted reconstruction of the school system structure and remodelled the years of schooling on a 6+3+3 basis (six years for primary school level, three years for middle school level and three years for secondary school level). The secondary education reform aimed also to create three branches of education; link basic and higher education; develop the evaluation system (Ordinance n° 76-35 of April 16th, 1976); and develop curriculum in terms of content, teaching methods and teacher training (World Bank 1993).

Nevertheless, basic education in Algeria has not significantly changed since 1970. The government recognized that the fundamental schooling system was overwhelmed by quality and efficiency problems. The system was marked by an absence of facilities, skilled teachers, and teaching materials; misunderstanding and rigidity caused by differing educational philosophies; and overcrowded classes. Also, the phenomenon of high repetition and mass dropouts because of mass schooling was inherent. The plain causes have not been researched. Yet, the government has categorized the early stated problems under institutional and instructional problems (World Bank 1993).

In 2000, Algerian authorities felt the need to reform the education system, which was described as being 'doomed' by president Abdelaziz Bouteflika prior to his election as a president. The president began the massive task of reforming the educational system

when he appointed 170 members of educators and politicians on May 13, 2000, to set up the 'National Commission for Reform of the Educational System' (Commission Nationale de Réforme du Système Educatif, known by its French initials as the CNRSE). The commission worked on its mission to outline the main thrusts of the reform for nearly a year. In mid-March 2001, it handed in its full report to the Algerian president (CNRSE, 2000). On August 13, 2003, Ordinance N° 03-08, that amended and completed the 1976 ordinance, was subsequently passed by the government to apply the new reform.

A National Council of Programmes (Conseil National des Programmes (CNP)), attached to the Ministry of National Education was charged with overhauling programmes in all disciplines. The CNP is the supreme body in charge of elaborating curricula in Algeria (Law N° 08-04 of January 23, 2008). A comprehensive curriculum review for each discipline, including the English language, was therefore carried out the result of which was a new competency-based (CB) curriculum. By adopting the CB Approach, the Algerian government sought to achieve a new vision about teaching and learning English as a means to respond to global needs for communication and modernization. The English language curriculum forms the focus of this paper in an attempt to establish how it was conceived, managed, and implemented. The curriculum will be referred to as 'Curriculum 2003' (year of its implementation) throughout the paper.

The Algerian educational reforms scenario as illustrated above proved that the quest for an effective education system has always been at the core of the country's policy making efforts. Though seriously targeting improvements in curriculum and instruction, Algerian reforms initiatives faced resistance and were often judged to have ended with mixed results (White, 2013). Mohamed Chérif Belkacem, Director General of Algiers Graduate School of Management, explained at a forum on education that, 'the lack of negotiation and dialogue (between the government and different stakeholders) have led to a total failure of all reforms of the system' (as cited in, Bedouani-Kernane, 2013). Moreover, the Algerian national education sector manifested chronic weaknesses that were mostly due to disruptive teachers' strikes and successive protests.

The Curriculum 2003 reform was strongly contested and criticized by national experts, teachers, unions and parents (Bedouani-Kernane, 2013). Teachers nationwide voiced their dissatisfaction and objections about the overall education reform as well as their socio-professional demands. Teachers' resistance appeared in many forms ranging from body language to sit-ins and strikes on sidewalks. Indeed, the 2003 reform has not encouraged teachers' involvement nor has it informed the public adequately and sought appropriate teachers' and public support. It was carried out from the beginning without consultation with teachers, trade unions, students and parents. Thus, the present study

recommends a reconsideration of the importance of involving all educational stakeholders in general and teachers in particular in the process of curriculum change.

The present paper first presents the research problem and questions, and then, the conceptual framework is highlighted. Furthermore, the methodological framework including the research paradigm, research design, sampling, and methods of data collection and analysis are briefly discussed. Finally, the paper presents and discusses the main findings of the study.

1.1. Research problem

The hierarchy of power, which is firmly entrenched in Algeria's education system, obliges a top-down process of curricula development. Authorities or their representative institutions author and transmit policy instructions to schools, and schools curricula become nation-wide and mandatory once they are approved by the ministry. Inspectors hold full responsibility for supervising and ensuring the implementation of curricula in schools (Executive Decree N° 12-240 of May 29, 2012 amending and completing Executive Decree N° 08-315 of October 11, 2008). At schools, neither local nor regional variations are permitted, and teachers are required and strictly enforced to comply with the national curricula and ministerial instructions (Law N° 08-04 of January 23, 2008, Article 20).

Teachers are not involved in the process of planning reforms in Algeria. Due to this marginalization, a sense of ownership might be lacking. The call to involve teachers in curriculum development, mainly in educational systems that adapt a learner-centred teaching approach as well as recognition of teachers' importance as vital participants of successful educational reforms is well established in literature (Etim & Okey 2015; Fastier, 2016; Galton, 1998; Mokua, 2010; Mosothwane, 2012). This call is relevant to Algeria since Curriculum 2003 places greater emphasis on a complete move away from a teacher-centred approach to a one in which the teacher is seen as a facilitator of learners' autonomy (Riche, Arab, Bensemmane, Ameziane & Hami, 2005).

The researcher argues that a curriculum can only be effectively implemented if teachers are part and parcel of the whole process of its development. The researcher made the case that receiving a new curriculum for implementation by teachers in a top-down setting is a risk-taking exercise. The researcher also problematized the notion of receiving a new curriculum (Curriculum 2003) by interrogating the methods of its dissemination, implementation, the degree of knowledge and skills of teachers and their affiliated perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of the curriculum.

The collection and analysis of data in this paper is guided by three main questions:

- 1) What are secondary school EFL teachers' views on Curriculum 2003 reform?
- 2) How does Curriculum 2003 reform marginalize teachers?
- 3) How can power relations between teachers' and government be changed to develop curriculum?

1.2. Conceptual Framework for the Study

The field of education has been continually in a state of transformation (Glass, 2008). An emergence of educational reforms in both developed and developing countries, including Algeria, characterized the world in the last couple of decades. However, the reform processes were often than not judged to be filled with problems (Fullan, 1982, 1992, 1993; Fullan & Stiegelbauer 1991). Education reforms, precisely that of curricula, do not always work fabulously and a mismatch between the curriculum and its implementation is always predictable (Cheserek & Mugalavai, 2012; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Curdt-Christiansen & Silver, 2012; Fullan, 1991; Pandian, 2002; Sarason, 1990; Wang, 2006). This mismatch might be a result of many factors (Richards, 2001) such as resistance to change, possibilities of change, and stakeholders' roles in leading change, to name few (Fullan, 2011; Hall & Hord, 2011). Though researchers' viewpoints may vary about the factors, one point of agreement is that teachers are the ones responsible for making change happen on the grounds when it comes to education reforms.

Educational developments may result in vain unless teachers become treasured actors and take part in the overall process of education (Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993). Curricula are judged to be successfully implemented only if teachers take part in the processes of design, dissemination, implementation (Cooper, Slavin and Madden 1998; Oloruntegbe 2011) and evaluation (Lieberman, Saxl & Miles, 2000; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). Many scholars have called therefore for the empowerment of teachers through control of the curriculum (Asuto, Clark, Read, McGree & deKoven Pelton Fernancez, 1994). Empowerment implies that a curriculum cannot simply be handed from the top to teachers to implement it. Teachers must however, be indorsed to make decisions not only about the curriculum, but also about their own professional development experiences (Li, 2004). Moreover, literature demonstrated that teachers who perceive top-down decision making are more apt to resist reforms (Ross et al., 1997; Smith et al., 1997).

The status of teachers as the most significant agents in educational reforms led a number of researchers to determine and scrutinize crucial factors that may introduce a gap between curricula intentions (theory) and classroom realities (practice) (Chang &

Goswami, 2011; Fullan, 2001; Karavas-Doukas, 1995; Owston, 2007; White, Hodge, & Martin, 1991). The researchers' findings revealed factors such as: the nature of innovation (Fullan, 2001; Rudduck, 1986; White et al., 1991); top-down power and teacher marginalization; the role of teachers' beliefs (Haynes, 1996); the examination system (Andrews, 2004; Cheng, 1997; Cheng & Watanabe, 2004; Choi, 2008); the context where innovation is implemented (Holliday, 1994; Tudor, 2003); and teachers' training and professional development to name a few (Bates, 2008; Coultas & Lewin, 2002; Dembélé & Lefoka, 2007; Lewin & Stuart, 2003; Pridmore, 2007; Pryor, Akyeampong, Westbrook & Lussier, 2012).

The nature of innovation, which refers to the originality, complexity, clarity, and triability of a change, has a major bearing on the acceptability and implementation process of an innovation (Fullan, 2001). Brindley and Hood (1990) argued that 'the more complex an innovation is perceived to be, the less likely it is to be adopted' (p.183). Teachers may often be asked to implement a new curriculum, under a given reform, without being given a clear explanation of how to put it into practice. Unclear and unspecified changes will consequently 'cause great anxiety and frustration to those sincerely trying to implement them' (Fullan, 2001, p.77), and this may result in disastrous implementation (Fullan, 2001).

Literature on education reforms highlights also top-down practices and misapplication of power that lead to teacher marginalization. Such top-down power is usually imposed by policy makers, as power is inherent in governments' systems, systems of management and bureaucracies (Apple, 1995, Dean, 1999; Tyler & Kramer, 1996). Tyack and Cuban (1995) contend that 'most reforms exist mainly in the realm of policy talk-visionary and authoritative statements' which are 'carried on among experts, policy makers, professional reformers, and policy entrepreneurs, usually involving harsh judgments about students, teachers and school administrators' (p.7), and hardly upsetting practices in schools. Moreover, the power that a top-down policy imposes does not allow for dialogue with teachers, and ignores the local micro and macro issues on the grounds.

Ingersoll (2003) argues that there are two opposing perspectives as regards the issue of control and power in education. The first view acknowledges no limitation on top-down power, whereas the second perspective describes schools as too centralized, too controlled and embedding too much bureaucracy. According to the same writer, the top-down focused and undemocratic power results in a lack of performance on the part of students and teachers. Over-regulation of teachers will decrease their autonomy, motivation and professional confidence (Ingersoll, 2003). Ingersoll further states:

Teaching is an occupation beset by tension and imbalance between expectations and resources, responsibilities and powers. On the one hand the work of teaching- helping prepare, train and rear the next generation of citizens- is both important and complex. But on the other hand those who are entrusted with the training of this next generation are not entrusted with much control over many of the key decisions of their work (Ingersoll, 2003, p.221).

Teachers' beliefs might also play a crucial role in determining teachers' rejection or adoption of innovations. They may have either a facilitating or an inhibiting role in translating the curriculum into daily classroom teaching practices (Haynes, 1996). Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) have stated that it is very unlikely that teachers can modify their teaching practices without changing their values and beliefs. Hence, changing teachers without changing contexts, beliefs, and structures, rarely creates a substantial reform (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Futrell, Holmes, Christie & Cushman, 1995).

Implementation of new curricula is also influenced by examinations, which might have both positive and negative effects on curriculum development. Examinations can reinforce or inhibit, speed up or slow down curriculum change. They can also clarify the change in relation to standards expected, and provide evaluative information on it (De Luca, 1994). If well matched to the curriculum development process, 'an examination can be a means of ensuring that the new courses are introduced or the new subject matter is taught and that the innovation takes place as planned' (De Luca, 1994, p.120). If on the other hand, curricular development and examinations are poorly matched, 'the curricular innovation can be slowed down, distorted or subverted altogether' (De Luca, 1994, p.121).

Social and cultural aspects might affect the acceptance or rejection of innovations by teachers (Holliday, 1994; Tudor, 2003). In other words, if an innovation entails new behaviours and roles that contradict with the socio-cultural structure of society, teachers might automatically not accept those new roles and behaviours. In stressing the central role of social context in curriculum reform, Morris (1998) stated that 'the implemented curriculum can be far removed from the intended curriculum, particularly if insufficient consideration is given to the context in which the reform is to take place' (p.120).

Education reforms have increased the focus of policy makers on teacher development. Thus, many studies have stressed the need to link curriculum reforms to teacher education and pedagogy (Bates, 2008; Coultas & Lewin, 2002; Dembélé & Lefoka, 2007; Lewin & Stuart, 2003; Pridmore, 2007; Pryor, Akyeampong, Westbrook & Lussier, 2012) as curriculum reforms are often planned and implemented without parallel reforms

in initial teacher education and ongoing professional development (Dembélé & Lefoka, 2007). According to Dilworth and Imig (1995), teachers need to be offered expanded and enriched professional development experiences. They need to be trained and re-trained for an effective productivity (Akinbote, 1999). On the contrary, with no adequate teacher professional development or plan of it, reforms will be misinterpreted by teachers, and hence fail (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

The elements discussed under this section aimed to provide an understanding of why an education reform may be accepted by some teachers but resisted and rejected by others. These elements are by no means exhaustive but seek to indicate some barriers to teachers' acceptance and implementation of innovations. Owing to the scope of the present paper, not all factors are discussed extensively. Factors identified and discussed here may not be the only ones impacting implementation; however, these are considered to be the most relevant factors to the current research on English language curriculum in Algeria.

Evidence drawn from the above discussions highlights the necessity for innovations to be planned cautiously. The planning should take into consideration all factors which may influence teachers' successful implementations. Evidence also confirms above all that teachers are not simply implementers of policies that are handed to them. However, they are capable to interpret, adjust, and implement policies according to their beliefs and the context where the reforms are implemented. So, without proficient autonomy and control over curriculum, teachers may become more like drivers using a GPS device.

In this paper, the writer argues that teachers are at the very heart of educational change. In order for curricula reform to occur, teachers need to be involved in the whole developmental process (design, dissemination, implementation, evaluation). Highlighting this important role of teachers supports the researcher's choice of considering them as main participants of the study, and hence making a call for their involvement in the Algerian curricula reforms context.

2. Method

2.1. Research Paradigm

The philosophical assumptions underlying this study came mainly from the critical paradigm. This paradigm is concerned with examining issues of power, control, and politics. Critical research, as stated by Troudi (2006) is about 'changing and improving the social conditions of people's existence' (p.8). This aim is usually attained by enabling researchers to practice deep democracy (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000) that involves identifying and transforming socially unjust social structures, policies, beliefs and

practices (Taylor & Medina, 2013). The critical paradigm trusts that people (teachers) should not accept the face value of realities (top-down curriculum development); they should however question them and try to politicize the truth in order to democratize it. Teachers should therefore have a role in the process of curriculum development and their voices should be heard at the top level.

2.2. Research Design

Given the critical nature of the current study which is related to curriculum research that describes and explores teachers' general views of the mandated curriculum and how implementation takes place in a top-down context; the study employed a mixed qualitative and quantitative research design. This design is particularly appropriate for this study as it best helps to answer the research questions. Moreover, it allows the writer to take a closer look into the intended and the enacted secondary school curriculum in Sétif province (Algeria).

The exploratory research design, from a critical perspective is appropriate for this study as it seeks to critique and problematize the top-down policy that marginalises teachers in curriculum development. The descriptive design is also suitable for this study as it defines the perceived roles of teachers in the curriculum development process and barriers to their participation in the implementation of curriculum 2003 and its concomitant processes.

The conduction of the mixed methods approach for data collection engaged two groups of participants. A questionnaire was conducted to discover Algerian secondary school EFL teachers' perceptions of the intended curriculum and uncover the factors intervening with and affecting their implementation activities and autonomy in the classroom. Besides, asynchronous semi-structured interviews were conducted with five National Education inspectors (secondary school level) to identify the intended curriculum and answer questions relevant to teachers' implementation and teacher education for a cross-check against the data gathered from teacher questionnaire to note discrepancies.

2.3. Location of the Study Area

The research was carried out in all public secondary schools in Sétif. Sétif is administratively divided into 20 Dairas and 60 Communes (municipalities) (Law N° 84-09 of February 4, 1984). The Daïra is an administrative district and each Daïra includes a number of municipalities. Geographically speaking, Sétif is divided into three main regions: 1) a mountainous area in the north, 2) high plains, and 3) a southern semi-arid

fringe area. The present researcher refers to these areas as zone one (Z1), zone two (Z2) and zone three (Z3).

2.4. Sample

The population of the study consists of all EFL full-time teachers (374) working in Sétif during the year 2015. The 374 teachers are affiliated to a total of 84 secondary schools on the province grounds. Z1 consists of 127 teachers, Z2 includes 211 teachers, and Z3 contains 36 teachers. In the study, the researcher opted for a stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling is a probability sampling technique where the population is divided into subgroups or 'strata', and a random sample is then selected from each subgroup (Fink, 1995, p. 11). Variables that are used to stratify a sample in educational research might include, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, years of teaching experience, grade level, or schools geographical location (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle 2006).

There are two types of stratified random sampling: proportionate and disproportionate. Using a proportional allocation requires that the sample size of a stratum is made proportional to the number of elements present in the stratum. Using an equal or disproportional technique requires that same number of participants is to be drawn from each stratum regardless of the strata sizes (Coolican, 1994; Cohen et al., 2007). The current study opted for the proportional stratified random sampling as this technique gives generally a probability random representative sample. The schools geographical location was the variable used to stratify the sample.

In order to calculate the sample size the researcher used the Sample Size Calculator for Market Research from Pearson NCS (www.pearsonncs.com), where she inputted the desired confidence level 95 per cent, confidence interval (± 5) and the population size (374), and the sample size was automatically calculated. Actually, the present researcher felt more comfortable with a 5 per cent degree of variation for feasibility considerations. The calculation produced a sample size of 190 participants affiliated to 39 secondary schools.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed about the aims of the research. In addition, they were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time and without a particular reason. Participants were also secured that their anonymity would be strictly guaranteed and that their identities would not be exposed to anyone.

2.6. Data analysis

The data collection process was carried out in two stages, namely the questionnaire stage and the interview stage. The decision about the order of these two stages was made on the basis of the priority decision (which one is primary) and the sequence decision (which one comes first) (Morgan, 1998; Morse, 1991). The questionnaire was administered to teachers during the year 2015. Interviews with inspectors took place in a subsequent stage during the same year.

A total number of 156 out of 190 questionnaires were collected, which makes a response rate of 82.10%. Each respondent was given a unique identification number from 1 to 156. The questionnaire was in paper form and hence after its administration the researcher had to transfer manually responses to closed statements into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 23.0 software for windows. The quantitative data was then analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency tables).

As concerns the interviews with inspectors, a total of nine respondents agreed to participate in the interview. Nevertheless, four of them decided to withdraw as soon as they received the emailed interview. Data from the interview were transferred into the computer through word processor. The data was transformed into tabular format where it was displayed by theme for each respondent. This way of organizing the data was intended to help in understanding the data and cross-referencing across themes and respondents.

Data from the questionnaire and interviews was compared and integrated in order to establish reliability and validity of the entire research findings and how these relate to the main research problem. For the sake of clarity, the various questions of the questionnaire and interview were divided into themes and relevant data collected from both instruments was discussed under each theme. As a result of the analytical process, four themes emerged from the data under which participant's thoughts and quotes were reported.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Participants' Views on Curriculum 2003 Development

The data collected showed that teachers and inspectors expressed different views with regard to the curriculum reform process. Teachers' attitudes on the curriculum and textbooks were mostly negative. They believe that the curriculum pedagogical goals are not explicitly listed and that its methodological guidelines are not helpful for their teaching. The problem related to resources (workbooks and other methodological means) was also one of their focused concerns. Additionally, the suitability of the curriculum reform to the schools' context was questionable. Most teachers felt that the curriculum

was unsuitable. Moreover, teachers specified that their autonomy in both instrumental and educational decision-making is restricted.

Inspectors' views differed markedly from teachers' perspectives. Inspectors trust that the curriculum is mostly context-relevant. They also believe that the curriculum is clear and explicitly lists the goals and objectives of the English language teaching course; provides information about the CBA; and lists the content to be taught as well as the teaching strategies and methods. The teachers were provided with textbooks, teacher's guide, the curriculum, the supporting documents which explain the curriculum, and the Algerian English framework. According to inspectors, these documents are deemed good enough for teachers to understand and implement the curriculum. Besides, inspectors clarified that teachers are always encouraged to use any extra materials in their implementation. Inspectors also aired another concern, which was misunderstanding of the curriculum. They held teachers liable for this fact.

As regards textbooks, data collected from the questionnaire showed that teachers' reliance on textbooks differed almost equally between those who depend on textbooks as an approved major source for their input, and those who view textbooks as one amongst several instructional tools. Results showed also that novice teachers over rely on textbooks and consequently might not consider other aids. This latter evidence echoed with inspectors perspectives, where data revealed that novice teachers (four inspectors were cited) were advancing less than their experienced counterparts (two inspectors were cited).

Curriculum implementation had therefore difficulty progressing between the novice and experienced teachers. Nonetheless, the bulk of teachers, novice and experienced, believe that textbooks are overloaded and their contents do not match with the curriculum objectives. Three inspectors shared this concern too. The majority of teachers also believe that the contents are neither well graded nor appropriate to learners. Though they seemed to hold textbooks in high regard with respect to the accuracy and up-to-datedness of the information they provide; organization and style, and physical features stood out as areas where textbooks were rated low by teachers.

3.2. Implementation of the Curriculum 2003

Data collection from the questionnaire showed that classroom level implementation was sometimes easy and other times difficult for teachers. Most teachers reported that it might take them from one to three years to be capable to implement the curriculum confidently. It is worth mentioning that the curriculum change was in line with global changes that make learners at the centre of learning. However, inspectors reported that teachers resisted the change. The problem does not seem to be with the curriculum per se, but with many factors, reported by both teachers and inspectors. The factors were

mainly grouped under four categories: curriculum, instructional, organizational, and institutional factors.

As regards the curriculum factors, teachers reported that the reform was imported, unplanned, and unclear. The other main factor identified by teachers was their non-involvement in the process of planning and policy formulation of the curriculum. The instructional factors included lack of conduct of classroom research; poor exposure to new teaching trends; lack of knowledge of subject matter, methods, and assessment; lack of teachers' motivation, incentives and rewards; lack of training; lack of professional development; lack of learners' interest; examination dominated teaching; and mismatch between teachers' beliefs and curriculum goals. Nevertheless, most teachers reported that attachment to old practice is not one of the instructional inhibiting factors to effective curriculum implementation.

One inspector held a contradictory belief as regards the issue of teachers' attachment to old practice. According to that inspector, teachers' (experienced ones) continued usage of old methods is an obstacle to effective curriculum implementation. Inspectors raised also the issues of lack of conduct of classroom research; teachers' inadequate knowledge of subject matter, CBA and learner assessment; lack of teachers' motivation and commitment; and lack of learners' interest which were in line with what teachers reported. Moreover, inspectors highlighted that examinations do not test what they are purported to test (four inspectors were cited) and shapes at the same time the content of the curriculum. Teaching is therefore geared to prepare learners for the test than to teach the curriculum (two inspectors were cited).

Teachers experienced similarities regarding the organizational factors. Top on the list of these were cited the lack of communication between teachers, inspectors and principals; and the influence of bureaucracy on teachers' commitment. Lack of coordination and the absence of a supportive mechanism were also estimated as challenges for teachers. Moreover, most teachers expressed their misgivings about the institutional factors and their concerns included scarcity of resources and school supplies; short teaching time and large class size; lack of support for teachers' initiatives; and lack of parental support. Likewise, inspectors highlighted the issue of large classes' size and lack of school teaching supplies (computer labs and the internet). According to inspectors, learning was not running properly in rural schools. Those schools were affected by the lack of teachers, facilities and coordination, and repetitive strikes.

Teachers recognized some of the factors that fostered their readiness for implementation and encouraged them to cope with the demands of reform. Some teachers acknowledged peer and inspectors support; their own use of extra materials; and their collaboration with colleagues and conduct of classroom research. Still, teachers were blamed for the failure of reform (two inspectors were cited). According to inspectors Curriculum 2003 has not articulated any deep change. Learners, society, the non-

involvement of teachers in the curriculum reform as well as the lack of teachers' preparedness were all quoted as reasons for the reform's failure.

3.3. System's Approach to Teacher Training

Data collected from the questionnaire showed that teachers are officially trained by their inspectors only two times during the whole school year. The training events, which were available for teachers to attend, included plenary sessions, conferences and seminars, pedagogical workshops, collaborative classroom research and observation, examples of good practices, and supervisory training practices. Some teachers resorted to e-Learning resources to improve their educational quality. Other teachers participated in teacher professional development networks to connect with colleagues across the country and boost their professional development.

Teachers showed concerns towards the quality of the trainings they attended. Though classroom research, supervisory training practices, e-Learning resources, and teachers' participation in Teacher Professional Development networks impacted teachers' pedagogical qualification largely; the rest of the listed training events remained limited, not to say non-effective. Although no feedback surveys were conducted to uncover teachers' dissatisfaction; inspectors had also asserted their implicit dissatisfaction with the types of trainings offered to teachers (three were cited). Inspectors recommended that the short period provided for teacher's training should be extended; and that the process of the training should be collaborative, including teachers, inspectors, and foreign experts. One inspector recommended that training should stop being theoretical, a fact that was in line with most teachers' beliefs about the nature of training events.

3.4. Teachers' Roles in Curriculum Development

Teachers were never involved in the process of curriculum development and findings from both categories of participants confirmed this evidence. Results from the questionnaire pointed out that teachers' roles entailed mostly applying the developed curriculum. Though this role is significant in the application phase of the curriculum development process; in this role teachers have the minimum of responsibility and involvement in the whole process. For sure, not any teacher can be involved in the process of curriculum development. Participants recognized this fact too. An effective and functional involvement requires professionally trained and committed teachers. Further, participants of the present study showed high awareness of the benefits of teacher involvement in curriculum development, namely curriculum ownership, commitment and professional development.

4. Conclusions

The overall research findings suggest that Algeria has a long way to go to sustain the intended educational change. The findings highlighted many perceived hurdles towards a successful reform and a subsequent involvement of teachers in it, such as domination, power, and authority of the central government. Nevertheless, the process of educational change is also influenced by a number of other factors.

To achieve the best balance of government and teachers' responsibilities in curriculum development to improve curriculum; teachers, school staff and government structures are expected to collaborate in the policy making process in order for reforms to become effective. In other words, the challenge is to attempt to change the current status quo of having teachers at the receiving end of curriculum verdicts, towards making them equal and valuable associates in curriculum development. The paper recommends a number of ways and strategies that should be considered towards the eradication of impediments to a meaningful teacher involvement in curriculum development.

First, policy makers should no longer assume that curriculum reform is a process that translates directly into classroom reality. The design of policy alone cannot regulate what happens at the classroom level. Teachers are the ones who ultimately decide about the fate of any reform when implementing it. Their attitudes, feelings and perceptions should never be diminished before launching innovations. Lack of such consideration is likely to lead to discrepancy between the system and teachers' beliefs. In addition, in order to change the attitudes of teachers towards reform in case of resistance, teachers need first to trust the education reform. Hence, for teachers to trust the reform, they must be included in its shaping so that they can personally invest in it.

Second, the process of curriculum dissemination cannot be done effectively through only directives and guidelines. Successful curriculum implementation requires passage from guidelines and seculars that are communicated to teachers to constant and democratic coordination and communication between all stakeholders before issuances of those directives. Moreover, official documents should be clear and comprehensive; curriculum aspects should be explicitly stated; and proper guidance and training should be included. To achieve clarity of the dissemination policy of the reform, the intended principles and guidelines need to be outlined to the concerned people at different levels.

Currently, no formal feedback procedures are in place in the public secondary school education system. However, it may prove useful for inspectors to collect feedback from everyone involved in the implementation of the curriculum, namely teachers and learners. The feedback could measure whether the curriculum and materials are suitably challenging or not, and whether all valid comments and suggestions are implemented. Equally, policy makers must plan regular and proper evaluation of policy reforms to measure actual implementation of the change.

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