




**ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNICATION SCHOLARS
& PROFESSIONALS OF NIGERIA**


**BETWEEN THE CLASSROOM AND THE FIELD:
BUILDING CONSENSUS ON GAPS AND PRIORITIES IN
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION EDUCATION**


**UNESCO/ACSPN Empowerment Series (AES)
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Introduction


- ▶ The Parlous state of journalism and mass communication and, communication in general, calls for a vigorous enhancement of the skills, competence and capability of the communicator in this age of serious struggle for survival.
 - ▶ It is in this light that the efforts of the Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN) should be commended for organizing these series of empowerment programmes.
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Key Concepts


- ▶ Before we delve into the main issues in this presentation, let us operationalize some key concepts in this topic.
 - ▶ **Building consensus:** This is coming to some agreement on the critical components of our field of enterprise about what needs to be done for forward movement.
 - ▶ **Gaps and Priorities:** Much as we may have tried, we are saying here that there are still bridges that we must to cross in order to bring our knowledge and practice to the desired level of functionality.
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- ▶ **Journalism and communication education:**
With the practice of journalism and communication education in a state of flux, what should the curriculum for journalism and communication education read?
 - ▶ I think we should begin our discussion from the last point above.
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- ▶ What modifications do we have to make to our curricula in journalism and other areas of the communication industry such as journalism, broadcasting, public relations, advertising, marketing, organizational communication, group communication, interpersonal communication, integrated communication, book publishing; modern communication – blogs, twitter, Skype, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Black Berry messaging (BBM), YouTube, Flickr, etc.
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- ▶ Apart from the gap that has always existed in our training programmes, the emergence of the new media has created a schism that has made a reassessment of what we do, either as scholars or practitioners, not only imperative but most urgent.
 - ▶ The effect that the modern media have brought to bear on the traditional communication strategies has, in diverse dimensions, compelled a reassessment of strategies and tactics.
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- ▶ What are some of the ramifications of these effects?
 - ▶ The waning reading culture has further plummeted;
 - ▶ Ability to write and speak good English or the local language has been seriously compromised;
 - ▶ Depth has been removed from the thought processes of our younger communicators and students;
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- ▶ Thoroughness is no longer a feature of the output of younger elements in the communication industry. To get a proof of this, you just need to listen to a newscaster, a programme presenter or read a message/story in print.
 - ▶ Consequent upon these, patronage of the media has become extremely low. Thanks to such other factors as purchasing power, electricity and the falling standards of education in Nigeria.
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- ▶ Loss of employment, underemployment and unemployment of young graduates are some of the direct results of these anomalies.
 - ▶ The overall consequence is that our society continues to slip into backwardness in several areas of endeavor such as commitment, dedication to duty, honesty of purpose, hard work and respect for the dignity of labour. Rather than progressing, we seem to be regressing in terms of our social values.
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- ▶ What should our priorities be? Having identified some of the gaps that exist in our various communication environments, what should we do to block them and ensure that communication, an important vehicle for development, is taken to the next level?
 - ▶ While I may not have the answers to all these questions, I suggest the following and ask other speakers here today to fill in the gaps.
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- ▶ As a first step, I think we need a national policy on communication education.
 - ▶ Secondly we need a regular review of our curricular, just as the UNESCO does at the international level.
 - ▶ To my academic colleagues, we must change our pedagogic direction and begin to equip our students to be able and capable to lead their readers, viewers and listeners in a way that would enable them to make the best meaning out of the happenings in their environments.
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- ▶ Our focus must be in the direction of interpretative journalism, that is, providing appropriate context for every information that we present, in whichever of the media we have listed above that we may find ourselves operating.
 - ▶ Unless we are able to do this, the changing face of communication will soon render the conventional ways of presenting the world to our numerous audiences irrelevant to the dynamic environment in which we live.
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- ▶ Unless and until citizens are able to gain functional and value-added information from the media, the era of impunity and brigandage by our leaders will continue.
 - ▶ Thirdly we need to emphasize that those in charge of our educational systems must restructure our primary and secondary education to lay a more solid foundation for education at the tertiary level.
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- ▶ Fourthly, to achieve the suggestions above, our governments, at all levels, must decide to fund education adequately. If they cannot surpass the 26% of GDP UNESCO prescription, they must not provide below it.
 - ▶ Until such a time as the prescription would become unnecessary, it must be a national policy that no tier of government in Nigeria should devote less than 26%, of its annual budget to education.
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- ▶ It must be sufficiently stressed that quality education is the foundation of development in all spheres of life, and therefore, must not be compromised in the country.
 - ▶ If all the wastages in our national life are checked, as the new national government is promising, I strongly believe that Nigeria can comfortably afford quality education for its citizens.
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- ▶ Another implication that we have to consider at this forum and put forward for national debate is the wider import of the new communication systems for the totality of our lives.
 - ▶ For example, their implications for our cultural life; – the things that we use communication for and to achieve; our national values – those that must be emphasized and preserved and those that we need to re-evaluate and jettison.
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- ▶ Yet another responsibility of those of us, particularly in teaching and research, is to launch critical research into the social media in order to distill the different aspects of them to know what to recommend for acceptance and what to recommend for rejection in our curricula and by our policy formulators and implementers.
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- ▶ This can only come through vigorous research that must be supported by all stakeholders, particularly the government and the industry.
 - ▶ Discipline is yet another value that requires to be emphasized and brought into our curricula.
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- ▶ Our emphasis must now shift from basic education to practical, technical and technological education that are urgently needed to uplift our nation from remaining a dumping ground for world's inferior products from other climes, to a knowledge factory where the rest of the world can come to purchase their needs.
 - ▶ Another is the implication for our manpower development; we need to begin to emphasize functionality in our training at all levels.
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Conclusion

- ▶ The time has come to begin a paradigm shift from esoteric system of education to the one that will encourage our students to the use their hands and heads to create jobs, wealth and development.
 - ▶ We need to take our students off the streets, looking for jobs that do not exist, and steer them in the direction of creating jobs and wealth for themselves and others.
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Thanks for listening!

