TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL FORMATION A PATHWAY TO EMANCIPATION FROM THE ABSURDITY OF THE MODERN SELF

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ABSTRACT

Education is often understood as the imparting or acquisition of knowledge, fostering reasoning and judgement. It shapes identity while also nurturing awareness of rights and obligations towards society. Transformative education, however, transcends routine teaching; it empowers learners, motivating them towards maturity and authentic liberation. It enables individuals to develop their talents, make informed choices, and contribute meaningfully to themselves, their communities, and society.

In Nigeria, education has largely relied on rote memorisation and teacher-led instruction, often in unwelcoming environments. Such approaches have hindered learners' capacity to realise their potential. As a result, many young people are shaped more by self-education, peer influence, digital lifestyles, and virtual identities than by formal schooling, with negative effects on growth and civic contribution.

This paper argues that transformative education requires a pedagogy that values and supports learners through empathy, inclusivity, and collaboration. Free from discrimination and class-based divisions, it should provide a curriculum enriched

with psycho-socio-economic and spiritual dimensions. Such a formation offers learners the chance to rewrite their stories and reorient their lives. Ultimately, transformative education directed towards emancipation can guide Nigerian youth away from the paradoxes of the modern self.

Keywords: Empowerment, Nigerian Education, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Transformative Education, Youth Development

1. Introduction

The conventional education system, particularly in Nigeria, is increasingly seen as inadequate for addressing the evolving needs of learners and society. Education, which should ideally be a tool for personal and societal growth, has been reduced to a rigid system of memorisation and examination-focused learning. This narrow approach neglects the cultivation of critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and social responsibility—skills that are vital for navigating the complexities of the modern world. Thus, there is an urgent need to shift from traditional methods to a more transformative educational model that emphasises holistic development, empowerment, and active citizenship.

1.1 Background and Context

Transformative education extends beyond the traditional notion of imparting knowledge and skills. It is an educational philosophy aimed at empowering learners to critically engage with their surroundings, challenge societal norms, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. In this framework, education is not passive but active, dynamic, and reflective. However, in many

countries, including Nigeria, it has become synonymous with rote learning—an approach that prioritises memorisation over understanding, creativity, and critical thought. This has produced learners who, despite holding academic credentials, are ill-prepared for contemporary life, which demands emotional intelligence, problem-solving, and collaboration.

The Nigerian educational system reflects these challenges. For decades, it has relied on teacher-centred instruction and examination-focused assessments, stifling creativity and discouraging independent thought. This marginalises the learner's potential, limiting opportunities for self-discovery and self-actualisation. Such an approach hinders personal growth and fails to prepare students for the socio-economic and political realities of their environment. As a result, many young Nigerians struggle with identity, purpose, and social cohesion, feeling disconnected from both cultural roots and the demands of modern society. Transformative education, therefore, emerges as a crucial alternative—promoting practices that nurture not only academic proficiency but also the development of the whole person.

1.2 Purpose and Significance of the Study

This paper explores transformative education as a pathway to freeing learners from the limitations of a fragmented modern identity. Drawing on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL),[1] it calls for an approach that combines knowledge with emotional

[1] S. M. Jones, McGarrah, M. W., & Kahn, J., "Social and Emotional Learning: A Principled Science of Human Development in Context," *Educational Psychologist* 54, no. 3 (2019): 129–143. DOI: 10.1080/00461520.2019.1625776.

intelligence, empathy, self-awareness, and social responsibility. Integrating SEL into Nigeria's curriculum shifts education beyond rote learning, encouraging learners to develop their talents for both personal and communal growth.[2]

By creating inclusive and reflective learning environments, transformative education prepares students to think critically, act purposefully, and respond to 21st-century challenges. Its aim is not only academic achievement but the formation of socially conscious citizens capable of contributing to their communities and society at large.

The study is significant in offering a framework for reimagining education in Nigeria and similar contexts. It highlights the shortcomings of current practices and proposes practical strategies to inspire stakeholders to pursue education that fosters intellectual, emotional, and social maturity.[3]

2.1 Defining Transformative Education

Transformative education transcends the mere transmission of knowledge and skills, focusing instead on the holistic development of learners. It empowers individuals to critically

[2]Janet Modupe Osinaike et al., "Social-Emotional Learning in Nigeria's K–16 Education System: A Systematic Review of Implementation and Gaps." *Path of Science* 11, no. 7 (2025): 1001-1012.

[3] **R. P. Weissberg, Durlak, J. A., Domitrovich, C. E., and Gullotta, T. P.,** "Social and Emotional Learning: Past, Present, and Future," in *Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning: Research and Practice*, ed. Joseph A. Durlak et al. (New York: Guilford Press, 2015), 3–19.

examine their beliefs, assumptions, and values, initiating profound personal and social change.[4] This approach is rooted in the principle that education should not solely prepare individuals for employment or economic success but should also cultivate self-awareness, critical consciousness, and active societal engagement.[5]

Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory

Jack Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory provides a foundational framework for understanding transformative education. According to Mezirow, transformative learning involves critically reflecting on existing beliefs, assumptions, and worldviews. Through this process, learners challenge taken-for-granted frames of reference, which can be cultural, social, or personal.[6] Mezirow identifies three core components of transformative learning:

1. **Critical Reflection:** This involves questioning one's beliefs and experiences. Mezirow argues that transformative learning begins with a "disorienting dilemma," where an individual's current perspective is

[4] Patricia A. Cranton, "Transformative Learning: A Narrative," in *Learning, Design, and Technology*, ed. Michael J. Spector, Barbara B. Lockee, & Marcus D. Childress (Cham: Springer, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-17727-4_37-2.

[5] Patricia Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide to Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016).

[6] Jack Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 168–70 — Mezirow describes transformative learning as questioning "taken-for-granted premises," leading to expanded frames of reference.

challenged, prompting critical reflection on assumptions. For instance, a learner may confront their biases about a particular social group, leading to a deeper understanding of prejudice and social justice.[7]

2. **Self-Awareness**: Transformative education fosters awareness of the self in broader social, cultural, and political contexts. It involves understanding one's role, privileges, and limitations within these contexts. Self-awareness enables learners to see how societal norms shape their perspectives and encourages them to develop a more empathetic worldview.[8]

3. **Perspective Transformation**: The fundamental goal of transformative education is a profound shift in perspective, changing how learners see themselves and the world. This transformation involves moving from a narrow viewpoint to a broader, more socially conscious outlook, allowing individuals to engage more critically and empathetically with their communities.[9]

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[7] Jack Mezirow, *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 22; see also International Review of Education, "Transformative learning… often follow some variation of the following phases … a disorienting dilemma … self-examination … a critical assessment of assumptions …"

[8] Mezirow, Jack. "An overview on Transformative Learning." *Lifelong Learning* (2008): 40-54.

[9] Mezirow, Jack. "Transformative Learning." *Challenging Educational Theories* (2015): 319.

The Role of Educators in Facilitating Transformative Learning

Educators are pivotal in facilitating transformative education. They must create a learning environment that encourages critical thinking, dialogue, and reflection. Rather than adopting a didactic, teacher-centred approach, transformative educators act as facilitators, guiding learners to explore and challenge their assumptions. Brookfield emphasises the importance of a "safe space" for dialogue where diverse perspectives can be critically examined. In such environments, students are encouraged to engage in deep conversations, confront uncomfortable truths, and eventually transform their understanding of themselves and the world.[10]

Transformative Education in Practice

Transformative education can take various forms, such as experiential learning, problem-based learning, and service-learning. These approaches provide opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts, fostering personal growth and social responsibility. Experiential learning emphasises "learning by doing" and deep reflection on experience.[11] Service-learning, a form of experiential education, combines academic learning with meaningful community service, enabling students to address real-world needs while developing

[10] Stephen D. Brookfield, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. John Wiley & Sons, 2017, 1-4.

[11] American Experiential Education, "Service-Learning and Experiential Education," *Pedagogy in Action*, National Centre for Science & Civic Engagement, originally published November 30, 2010, accessed 2025, https://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/service/experiential.html.

empathy and social responsibility.[12] **Problem-based learning (PBL)** also exemplifies transformative education. It immerses students in real-world issues—such as sustainability or inequality—encouraging critical thinking, collaboration, and innovative problem-solving.[13] PBL supports transformative learning by shifting curricula from knowledge recall to critical analysis and practical application.[14]

2.2 The Role of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Transformative Education

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is a crucial element of transformative education as it addresses the emotional and social dimensions of learning, often neglected in traditional education models. SEL focuses on developing students' emotional intelligence, empathy, interpersonal skills, and overall well-being, essential for personal development and societal engagement.[15]

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12 American Experiential Education.

13 Philip Bamber, *Transformative Education through International Service-Learning: Realising an Ethical Ecology of Learning* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 1-5.

14 Ian Thomas, "Critical Thinking, Transformative Learning, Sustainable Education, and Problem-Based Learning in Universities," *Journal of Transformative Education* 7, no. 3 (2009): 245–64, https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344610385753.

15 Robert J. Jagers, Deborah Rivas-Drake, and Brittney V. Williams, "Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Toward SEL in the Service of Educational Equity and Excellence," *Educational Psychologist* 54, no. 3 (2019): 162–84, https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032. See Mary Christine Ugobi-Onyemere, "John Paul II in the Light of Thomas Aquinas: Personalism, Mercy and the Quest for Holistic Existence." *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 29 (2017): 25-51, 36-39.

Core Competencies of SEL

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) identifies five core competencies central to SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.[16]

1. **Self-Awareness**: Recognising one's emotions, strengths, and limitations. In transformative education, self-awareness is the foundation for critical reflection. Students learn to identify their emotions, understand their impact on behaviour, and develop a nuanced understanding of their identities.
2. **Self-Management**: The ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviours. Effective self-management enables learners to handle stress, control impulses, and stay motivated to achieve personal and academic goals, fostering resilience and adaptability.[17]
3. **Social Awareness:** Understanding others' perspectives, showing empathy, and recognising social norms and ethical responsibilities. Social awareness aligns with transformative education's goals, encouraging learners to step outside their comfort zones and develop

[16] CASEL, "The CASEL 5: Core Competencies of SEL," in *What Is the CASEL Framework?*, CASEL, accessed 2025, https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/

[17] Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), *Evidence-Based SEL Programs: CASEL Criteria Updates and Rationale* (Chicago: CASEL, 2020), 4.

a more inclusive perspective.[18]

2. **Relationship Skills**: The ability to establish and maintain healthy relationships, including communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution. Transformative education promotes a collaborative learning environment where students work together, understand different perspectives, and solve problems.[19]
3. **Responsible Decision-Making**: Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behaviour. It involves evaluating the consequences of actions and decisions, considering the well-being of oneself and others, and is linked to social responsibility in transformative education. [20]

Integrating SEL into the Curriculum

Integrating SEL into the curriculum involves more than adding discrete SEL lessons; it requires a holistic approach that permeates all aspects of school life. Educators should design learning experiences that are cognitively challenging and emotionally and socially

[18] North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, "Defining Social and Emotional Learning," NC SEL, accessed 2025, https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/nc-social-emotional-learning/defining-social-and-emotional-learning/.

[19] Gwendolyn M. Lawson et al., "The Core Components of Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning Programs," *Prevention Science* 20, no. 3 (2019): 549-67.

[20] CASEL, *Evidence-Based SEL Programs: CASEL Criteria Updates and Rationale*, 4.

engaging.[21] For instance, the book Integrating SEL into Your Curriculum: Practical Lesson Plans for Grades 3-5 demonstrates how subject areas like ELA, Social Studies, and Science can be adapted to include SEL skill practice (e.g., through reflection, perspective-taking, role-play).[22] Literature classes could include narratives that invite students to explore character motivations and moral dilemmas, thereby developing empathy and perspective-taking skills. History or Social Studies courses can facilitate discussions of ethical issues and social justice, encouraging students to reflect[23]on their values and develop critical consciousness.

The Impact of SEL on Academic Achievement and Social Growth

Research shows that SEL positively impacts[24] academic achievement, emotional well-being, and social behaviour. A meta-analysis by Durlak and colleagues found that

[21] John Dacey, Gian Criscitiello, & Maureen Devlin, *Integrating SEL into Your Curriculum: Practical Lesson Plans for Grades 3-5* (New York: Routledge, 2018). — This resource offers many examples of embedding SEL into academic lessons.

[22] Marilyn Janette Lindsay, "Integrating Social Emotional Learning into Secondary Curriculum," master's thesis, Dominican University (2013).

[23] John Dacey*, Integrating SEL into Your ELA Curriculum: Practical Lesson Plans for Grades 6-8*, Lindsey Neves Baillargeron, Nancy Tripp (2019).

[24] Joseph A. Durlak, Roger P. Weissberg, Allison B. Dymnicki, Rebecca D. Taylor, & Kriston B. Schellinger, "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions," *Child Development* 82, no. 1 (2011): 405–32, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.

students in SEL programmes demonstrated improved academic performance, reduced emotional distress, and better classroom behaviour, suggesting that SEL enhances students' emotional and social competencies and supports their overall academic success.[25]

SEL as a Tool for Social Change

SEL is not only about individual growth but also serves as a tool for social change. By fostering empathy, collaboration, and ethical decision-making, SEL prepares students to become active, responsible citizens. When integrated into transformative education, SEL encourages students to engage in community issues, advocate for social justice, and contribute to building equitable societies.[26] For example, Transformative Social and Emotional Learning: Toward SEL in the Service of Educational Equity and Excellence (Jagers, Rivas-Drake, & Williams, 2019) outlines how SEL can include practices of identity, agency, belonging, and engagement, thereby serving social change and equity goals.[27] Also, Social and Emotional Learning in the Classroom, by Gueldner, Feuerborn, and Merrell, provides numerous classroom examples—including service-learning and

[25] Martijn Sklad, René Diekstra, Martin de Ritter, J. Ben, & C. Gravesteijn, "Effectiveness of School-Based Universal Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Programmes: Do They Enhance Students' Development in the Area of Skill, Behaviour and Adjustment?," *Psychology in the Schools* 49, no. 9 (2012): 892–909, https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21641.

[26] Jagers, et. al., "Transformative Social and Emotional Learning…," 162-84.

[27] Jagers, et. al., "Transformative Social and Emotional Learning…," 162-84.

community involvement—that promote social-emotional skills alongside civic commitment.[28]

Challenges and Considerations in Implementing SEL

Despite its many benefits, implementing SEL within a transformative education framework poses real challenges. Educators may face resistance from stakeholders who prioritise traditional academic outcomes over social-emotional development. There may be insufficient resources, training, or institutional support for teachers to integrate SEL effectively. Therefore, successful implementation often requires a whole-school, systemic approach in which SEL is embedded into school culture, policies, and daily practices.[29]

3. Critique of the Current Nigerian Educational System

The Nigerian educational system faces significant challenges that undermine its effectiveness in preparing young people for modern society. This section critically examines these shortcomings, focusing on the limitations of traditional educational practices

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[28] Kenneth W. Merrell, Barbara A. Gueldner, & Laura L. Feuerborn, *Social and Emotional Learning in the Classroom, 2nd Edition: Promoting Mental Health and Academic Success* (New York: Guilford Press, 2021).

[29] Eva Oberle, Celene E. Domitrovich, Duncan Meyers, & Roger P. Weissberg, "Establishing Systemic Social and Emotional Learning Approaches in Schools: A Framework for School-wide Implementation," *Cambridge Journal of Education* 46, no. 3 (2016): 277-97, https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2015.1125450. This article emphasises that SEL implementation is most effective when the entire school community is involved, when there is high-quality training, leadership commitment, and systemic supports rather than isolated or one-off programmes.

and their impact on youth and society. It highlights the urgent need for a transformative educational approach that integrates principles like SEL to foster more holistic development.

3.1 Limitations of Traditional Educational Practices

The Nigerian educational system is characterised by a traditional model that relies heavily on teacher-centred approaches, rote memorisation, and examination-focused learning. This model, rooted in colonial education policies, was initially designed to produce clerks and administrators, not critical thinkers or innovators.[30] Despite reforms, this legacy continues to shape the educational landscape, limiting creativity, critical thinking, and emotional development.[31]

A significant limitation of this system is its emphasis on memorising facts rather than developing critical thinking. Students are encouraged to memorise large amounts of information to pass exams, with little focus on understanding, analysis, or application. This discourages intellectual curiosity and stifles creativity, as students prioritise recalling information over

[30] M. B. Adeyemi, & A. A. Adeyinka. "Some key issues in African traditional education." *McGill Journal of Education/Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill* 37, no. 002 (2002): 223-240, 236-236.

[31] Kehinde Destiny Ilemobayo & Adeyemi Emmanuel Gboyega, "Pragmatism and Learning in Nigerian Schools," *Studies in Education* (Adekunle Ajasin University) (2021), accessed 21st July 2025, https://sie.com.ng/index.php/journal/article/view/43. This article explicitly critiques how Nigerian education remains heavily theoretical, encourages rote learning, and impedes creativity and independent thinking.

engaging critically with content.[32] The result is an education system that values conformity over creativity, compliance over curiosity, and repetition over innovation.[33]

The teacher-centred nature of Nigerian classrooms further exacerbates these issues. Teachers are seen as the ultimate authority and primary source of knowledge, while students are passive recipients. This dynamic limits student participation and prevents the development of problem-solving, collaboration, and independent thinking skills. Research indicates that this pedagogy fails to deeply engage students, as it does not allow them to question, explore, or construct their understanding.[34]

Further, the educational environment in Nigeria often lacks the resources and support necessary to foster a positive and inclusive atmosphere. Many schools are overcrowded, underfunded, and lack basic facilities, which negatively affects teaching and learning. Such conditions are not conducive to learner-centred and

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[32] Jane Itohan Oviawe, "Reforms and Innovations needed in Secondary Education for Convergence of Skills Acquisition and Development." In *The Nigerian academic forum*, vol. 19, no. 1, (2010): 1-5.

[33] Adeyemi, Michael B., and Augustus A. Adeyinka. "The Principles and Content of African Traditional Education." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 35, no. 4 (2003): 425-440, 437-438.

[34] Eucharia Okwudilichukwu Ugwu, "Classroom Process and Causes of Worsening High School Students' Performance in Literature-in-English in Nigeria," *African Journal of Teacher Education* 10, no. 1 (2021): 282-306; accessed 2025, https://journal.lib.uoguelph.ca/index.php/ajote/article/view/6637. Akyeampong, Kwame. "Teacher educators' practice and vision of good teaching in teacher education reform context in Ghana." *Educational Researcher* 46, no. 4 (2017): 194-203.

interactive education essential for transformation.[35] Without adequate resources, teachers may struggle to implement innovative methods that promote critical thinking and SEL.

The system also overlooks students' socio-emotional development. Emotional intelligence, empathy, and interpersonal skills are rarely included in the curriculum, yet these competencies are crucial for navigating contemporary life.[36] The focus remains narrowly on cognitive development and academic achievement, failing to recognise that education should also shape individuals who can positively contribute to their communities and society at large.[37]

3.2 The Impact on Youth and Society

The shortcomings of the Nigerian educational system have profound implications for youth development and broader society. The failure to cultivate critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence among students results in several negative outcomes impacting both individual growth and societal progress.

One visible consequence is the struggle among Nigerian youth with identity formation, self-efficacy, and social cohesion. Many students graduate with a limited sense of

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[35] K. Kazeem & O. Ige, "Redressing the Growing Concern of the Education Sector in Nigeria." *Edo Journal of Counselling* 3, no. 1 (2010): 40-49.

[36] Weissberg, Roger P., Joseph A. Durlak, Celene E. Domitrovich, and Thomas P. Gullotta. "Social and Emotional Learning: Past, Present, and Future." (2015).

[37] Ugobi-Onyemere, "John Paul II in the Light of Thomas Aquinas…," 42-47.

self-awareness and confidence in their abilities. This lack of self-efficacy can lead to disillusionment and frustration, particularly when faced with challenges in the labour market or civic life.[38] Young people conditioned to think within rigid frameworks may find it difficult to adapt to dynamic environments, such as modern workplaces or diverse social settings.[39]

The narrow focus on academic success and the neglect of socio-emotional development contribute to social problems, including unemployment, crime, and cyber delinquency. The Nigerian labour market increasingly demands skills like creativity, adaptability, teamwork, and problem-solving—competencies often underdeveloped due to current educational practices. As a result, many young graduates struggle to secure meaningful employment, leading to high rates of unemployment and underemployment.[40]This situation exacerbates economic

[38] B. O. Adegoke, & A. L. Oyeyemi. "Physical Inactivity in Nigerian Young Adults: Prevalence and Socio-Demographic Correlates." *Journal of Physical Activity and Health* 8, no. 8 (2011): 1135-1142.

[39] J. Suratno, W. S. Tonra, & Ardiana. "The Effect of Guided Discovery Learning on Students' Mathematical Communication Skill." In *AIP Conference Proceedings*, vol. 2194, no. 1, 020119. AIP Publishing LLC, 2019.

[40] World Bank, *Jobs in Nigeria: Closing the Gaps in a Polarized Labor Market*, Nigeria Country Report, 2016, accessed 21st July 2025, https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/publication/nigeria-more-productive-jobs-profile-work-workers.

inequality and social tensions, creating a cycle of poverty and disenfranchisement.[41]

The absence of a strong focus on ethical values, empathy, and community engagement in education has also contributed to anti-social behaviours among Nigerian youth. Issues such as cyberbullying, internet fraud (locally known as "Yahoo-Yahoo"), and other forms of digital delinquency are prevalent.[42] These behaviours often stem from a lack of ethical decision-making, a key competency central to SEL and transformative education. Without learning to consider the consequences of their actions on others, young people are more likely to engage in harmful activities.[43]

Transformative education, particularly through SEL, offers a promising solution to these challenges. By integrating SEL into the curriculum, educators can help students develop self-awareness, empathy, relationship

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41 E. O. Mofoluwawo, "Youth Unemployment Saga in Nigeria: Implications for Security Challenges and Economic Development," *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* (2024), accessed 21st July 2025, https://journals.scholarpublishing.org/index.php/ASSRJ/article/view/538.

42 T. J. Owolabi, & O. T. Adeosun, "Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria: An Interrogation into the Survival Strategies of Lagos Youths." *Journal of Economics and Management* 19 (2023): 187-206, 195-196.

43 Samuel Ayodeji Omolawal, "Youth Unemployment and the Use of Social Connections in Gaining Access into the Nigerian Labour Market: Perspectives of Unemployed Youths in South-West Nigeria," *IFE PsychologIA: An International Journal* 31, no. 1 (2023): accessed 26th July 2025, https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ifep/article/view/246963.

skills, and responsible decision-making abilities. These competencies are crucial for building a more engaged, empathetic, and responsible generation. An SEL-focused curriculum would encourage students to manage their emotions, resolve conflicts amicably, and build positive relationships with peers and community members.[44] This holistic approach supports academic success while nurturing social responsibility and active citizenship.

The Need for a Paradigm Shift

To address systemic issues in the Nigerian educational system, a shift towards transformative education is essential. This involves moving away from traditional, examination-focused teaching methods toward more inclusive, learner-centred, and socially responsive models of instruction.[45] Such models balance cognitive, emotional, and social development, ensuring students are not only academically proficient but also emotionally aware, empathetic, and equipped to contribute positively to their communities.

Implementing this shift requires robust strategies, including enhanced teacher training, curriculum reform, and policy support. Teachers need opportunities to engage in experiential

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[44] M. P. McCormick, E. Cappella, E. E. O'Connor, & S. G. McClowry. "Social-Emotional Learning and Academic Achievement: Using Causal Methods to Explore Classroom-Level Mechanisms." *Aera Open* 1, no. 3 (2015): 1-26.

[45] R. A. M. Ezeala & I. G. Durumba, "Learner-Centered Instruction: A Paradigm Shift from Teacher-Centered Instruction in the Teaching of Basic Technology in Upper Basic Schools," *Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies* 2, no. 3 (2020): 177-188; accessed 26th July 2025, https://www.sfjesgs.com/index.php/SFJESGS/article/view/68.

pedagogies, reflective practice, and student-centred instructional design.[46] The curriculum must be reimagined to integrate critical thinking, socio-emotional learning, and authentic, real-world learning experiences.[47] Policymakers and educational leaders must advocate for policies that support these changes, ensure adequate resources are allocated, and foster school environments where innovation and inclusivity are central to educational practice.

4. Curriculum Changes for Transformative Education

Transformative education requires a fundamental reimagining of the curriculum to foster critical thinking, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and cultural awareness. The current educational framework in Nigeria, with its emphasis on rote memorisation and examination-based assessment, must be restructured to encourage more holistic student development. This section outlines specific curriculum changes that can promote transformative education and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL).

4.1 Incorporating Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

A transformative curriculum should prioritise critical thinking and problem-solving skills, moving away from rote memorisation and passive learning.

[46] O. A. Ajani, "The Role of Experiential Learning in Teachers' Professional Development for Enhanced Classroom Practices," *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching* 12, no. 4 (2023): 143-55, https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v12n4p143.

[47] S. O. Chukwuedo, U. N. Ogwubuya, & N. M. Agbo. "Business And Technical Education Students' Experiential Learning and Study Engagement: Kolb's Model Analytical Approach." *Aau Journal of Business Educators* 5, no. 1 (2025): 113-123.

The Nigerian educational system currently lacks sufficient emphasis on developing analytical abilities and questioning societal norms. To address this, the curriculum should include subjects and activities that promote higher-order thinking.[48]

Introducing modules such as "Philosophy for Children," "Critical Thinking and Ethics," or "Logic and Reasoning" can equip students with tools for reflective and analytical thinking.[49] These subjects encourage learners to question, debate, and critically assess different viewpoints, fostering a deeper understanding of various issues. They also help students analyse problems from multiple perspectives, propose solutions, and evaluate the implications of their choices.

Problem-based learning (PBL) is another effective way to cultivate critical thinking. By engaging students in real-world problems and encouraging collaborative solution-seeking, PBL promotes active learning and empowers students to take ownership of their education. For instance, students could work on projects related to local environmental issues, public health challenges, or community development, requiring them to apply critical thinking, research skills, and collaborative problem-

[48] Matthew Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2003).
[49] Michael Pritchard, "Philosophy for Children," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2002 Edition), accessed 29th July 2025, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2002/entries/children/

solving.[50] This approach aligns with transformative education's goal of empowering learners to actively participate in their communities and society.

4.2 Introducing Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in the Curriculum

Integrating SEL into the Nigerian curriculum is essential for nurturing emotionally intelligent, empathetic, and socially responsible citizens. SEL involves teaching students to manage their emotions, build positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations constructively.[51] Given the social challenges facing Nigerian youth, embedding SEL within the curriculum can foster personal growth, emotional resilience, and social cohesion.[52]

To effectively integrate SEL, a structured approach with lessons and activities focused on self-awareness, empathy, conflict resolution, and relationship building is required. This can be achieved through dedicated SEL classes or by embedding SEL principles into existing subjects.[53] For instance, literature classes could explore

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[50] Cindy E. Hmelo-Silver, "Problem-Based Learning: What and How Do Students Learn?," *Educational Psychology Review* 16, no. 3 (2004): 235-66, https://doi.org/10.1023/B:EDPR.0000034022.16470.f3.

[51] CASEL, *CASEL's SEL Framework: What Are the Core Competence Areas and Where Are They Promoted?* (Chicago: CASEL, 2020), accessed 2025, https://casel.org/casel-sel-framework-11-2020.

[52] Jagers, et al, "Transformative Social and Emotional Learning…," 162-84.

[53] "What Is the CASEL Framework?," CASEL, accessed 2025, https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/.

character motivations, ethical dilemmas, and emotional journeys, fostering empathy and social awareness. In history lessons, discussions could cover historical conflicts, ethical leadership, and the social consequences of decisions, linking past events to present-day moral and social challenges.[54]

SEL principles can also be incorporated into classroom management and school culture. Teachers can create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where students feel valued.[56] This involves using restorative practices for conflict resolution, encouraging student participation in decision-making, and fostering a collaborative atmosphere that promotes mutual respect and understanding.[57]

4.3 Promoting Community-Based Learning and Service-Learning Projects

Transformative education encourages learning beyond classroom walls, engaging students in real-world contexts to develop social responsibility and civic engagement.

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54 K. M. Zinsser, R. P. Weissberg, & L. Dusenbury. "Aligning Preschool through High School Social and Emotional Learning Standards: A Critical and Doable Next Step." *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning* (2013).

55 R. D. Taylor, E. Oberle, J. A. Durlak, & R. P. Weissberg. "Promoting positive youth development through school based social and emotional learning interventions: A Meta Analysis of Follow up Effects." *Child Development* 88, no. 4 (2017): 1156-1171.

56 CASEL, *What Is Social & Emotional Learning?*, CASEL District Resource Center, accessed 21st July 2025, https://drc.casel.org/what-is-sel/.

57 R. P. Weissberg, "Education to Promote all Students' Social, Emotional, and Academic Competence." *Past as Prologue: The National Academy of Education at* 50, no. 50 (2015): 185-210.

Community-based learning and service-learning projects offer opportunities for students to apply academic knowledge while making meaningful contributions to their communities. These approaches deepen understanding of societal issues and help students develop empathy, leadership, and problem-solving skills.[58]

Schools can partner with local organisations, non-profits, and community groups to create service-learning opportunities that address community needs. For example, students could participate in projects related to environmental sustainability, public health campaigns, literacy programmes, or social justice advocacy. These projects allow students to gain hands-on experience in teamwork, leadership, project management, and community organising.[59] By engaging in these activities, students connect classroom knowledge with real-world applications, fostering a sense of purpose and social commitment.

Community-based learning also aligns with SEL goals by promoting collaboration, empathy, and ethical decision-making. For instance, working on a community garden project not only teaches students about biology and ecology but also encourages them to consider issues of food security, community health, and environmental

[58] N. A. Elbertson, M. A. Brackett, & R. P. Weissberg. "School-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programming: Current Perspectives." *Second International Handbook of Educational Change* (2010): 1017-1032. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2660-6_57.

[59] J. Eyler, & D. E. Giles Jr. *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning? Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series*. Jossey-Bass, Inc., 350 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94104, 1999.

justice. These experiences help students understand their role as citizens and their responsibility to contribute positively to their communities.[60]

4.4 Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Studies

A transformative curriculum should recognise and value indigenous knowledge systems and cultural heritage. The current Nigerian curriculum often prioritises Western-oriented knowledge, marginalising local histories, cultures, and epistemologies. Incorporating indigenous knowledge and cultural studies can help students appreciate the richness of their own cultural backgrounds, fostering a sense of identity, belonging, and pride.[61]

Integrating local history, cultural studies, and indigenous wisdom into the curriculum allows students to learn from the knowledge systems that have sustained their communities for generations. Subjects like "African Philosophy," "Local Histories," "Traditional Ecological Knowledge," or "Indigenous Governance Systems" would provide students with a comprehensive understanding of their cultural roots and encourage

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[60] Emmanuel Dumbuya, "Advancing Educational Excellence through the Holistic Experiential Learning (HEL) Model: A Framework for Student-Centered, Community-Engaged Curriculum." *Community-Engaged Curriculum (October 08, 2024)* (2024): 1-8.

[61] Marie Battiste, "Naturalizing Indigenous knowledge in Eurocentric Education." *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 32, no. 1 (2009): 5-18.
George J. S. Dei, "Rethinking the Role of Indigenous Knowledges

critical engagement with local and global knowledge systems.[62]

Including indigenous knowledge and cultural studies also supports the development of cultural competence, a key component of SEL. Students learn to appreciate and respect cultural diversity, build cross-cultural relationships, and engage constructively in a multicultural society. This approach bridges the gap between formal education and students' lived experiences, making education more relevant and meaningful. It also fosters a sense of collective responsibility and social cohesion, vital for nation-building in a culturally diverse country like Nigeria.

5. Implementing Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): Strategies and Practices

For transformative education to be effective, practical strategies must integrate SEL into the school environment. Implementing SEL involves more than adding it to the curriculum; it requires a whole-school approach involving educators, students, families, and the wider community. This section discusses strategic steps and practices for embedding SEL in schools to support transformative education.

5.1 Developing a Clear SEL Framework and Vision

Successful SEL implementation begins with establishing a clear vision aligned with the school's broader educational mission and values. A well-defined SEL

[62] George J. S. Dei, "Rethinking the Role of Indigenous Knowledges in the Academy." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 4, no. 2 (2000): 111-132.

framework outlines the specific goals, values, and competencies—such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—that the school seeks to develop in its students.[63]

Creating an SEL framework should be a collaborative process involving input from educators, administrators, students, and families to ensure it reflects the community's values and aspirations. This approach strengthens stakeholder buy-in and ensures the framework is culturally relevant and contextually appropriate. Schools should also set clear, measurable outcomes for SEL, such as improved emotional regulation, enhanced interpersonal skills, and reduced behavioural issues. Regular assessments and reflections on these outcomes can guide the ongoing refinement of SEL practices.[64]

Aligning SEL goals with academic objectives reinforces the idea that social-emotional growth complements academic achievement. For instance, a school's vision could include high academic standards while nurturing compassionate, resilient, and socially responsible individuals who contribute meaningfully to society.

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[63] Stephanie M. Jones, & Suzanne M. Bouffard. "Social and Emotional Learning in Schools: From Programs to Strategies and Commentaries." *Social Policy Report* 26, no. 4 (2012): 1-33, 9-16.

[64] Jagers, Robert J., Deborah Rivas-Drake, and Brittney Williams. "Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Toward SEL in Service of Educational Equity and Excellence." In *Social and Emotional Learning*, 39-62. Routledge, 2025.

This holistic vision ensures that SEL is integral to the school's mission rather than an add-on.[65]

5.2 Integrating SEL into Daily Routines and Classroom Practices

For SEL to be transformative, it must be seamlessly integrated into daily routines and classroom practices.[66] This involves embedding SEL activities throughout the school day to provide consistent opportunities for students to develop social-emotional skills. One approach is to incorporate SEL into morning meetings or assemblies, where activities promote mindfulness, gratitude, and emotional regulation, setting a positive tone for the day.[67]

Mindfulness exercises, reflective writing, and group discussions are valuable for cultivating self-awareness and empathy. For example, after a conflict, teachers can facilitate "SEL moments" where students reflect on their emotions, discuss constructive

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[65] Lisa Chu, & Michael DeArmond. "Approaching SEL as a Whole-School Effort, Not an Add-On: Lessons from Two Charter Networks." *Center on Reinventing Public Education* (2021): 1-15, 9-14.

[66] Stephanie M. Jones, Michael W. McGarrah & Jennifer Kahn, "Social and Emotional Learning: A Principled Science of Human Development in Context." *Educational Psychologist* 54, no. 3 (2019): 129-143, 132-137, DOI: 10.1080/00461520.2019.1625776. [Jones, Stephanie M., Michael W. McGarrah, & Jennifer Kahn. "Social and Emotional Learning: A Principled Science of Human Development in Context." In *Social and Emotional Learning*, 4-19. Routledge, 2025].

[67] Linda Dusenbury, Sophia Calin, Celene Domitrovich, & Roger P. Weissberg. "What Does Evidence-Based Instruction in Social and Emotional Learning Actually Look Like in Practice? A Brief on Findings from CASEL's Program Reviews." *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning* (2015): 1-6.

management strategies, and set personal goals for improvement through journaling, role-playing, or peer mediation.

Integrating SEL into subject-specific lessons can also enhance both academic and social-emotional learning.[68] For example, literature classes can explore empathy, ethics, and emotional intelligence by analysing characters' motivations and dilemmas, while science classes can include group projects requiring collaboration, communication, and problem-solving. By embedding SEL into everyday teaching, educators create a cohesive environment where students continually practise these essential skills.

Cultivating a classroom culture that values inclusivity, empathy, and respect is another effective strategy. Teachers can model positive behaviours and provide consistent feedback to help students internalise these values. For example, collaboratively developing a classroom agreement on norms around kindness, listening, and constructive feedback empowers students to take ownership of their behaviour and promotes a supportive community.

5.3 Providing Professional Development for Educators

Teachers are pivotal in SEL implementation, as they are the primary facilitators of social-emotional development in the classroom. Providing ongoing professional

[68] Joseph A. Durlak, Roger P. Weissberg, Allison B. Dymnicki, Rebecca D. Taylor, and Kriston B. Schellinger. "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions." *Child Development* 82, no. 1 (2011): 405-432, 408-412.

development is essential to equip educators with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to integrate SEL effectively. Training programmes should cover understanding SEL principles, building emotional intelligence, and fostering positive classroom environments.[69]

Professional development should also include practical strategies for integrating SEL into lesson plans, managing classroom dynamics, and addressing diverse social-emotional needs. Workshops, seminars, and coaching sessions can provide hands-on experience with SEL tools, such as interactive activities and reflective exercises. Equally, educators should be trained in culturally responsive teaching practices that reflect students' diverse backgrounds, ensuring that SEL is inclusive and equitable.

Mentorship and peer collaboration further enhance professional development by creating a supportive learning community where teachers can share experiences and strategies. Professional learning communities (PLCs) allow educators to engage in reflective practice, exchange ideas, and develop innovative strategies for promoting SEL.[70] Investing in comprehensive professional

[69] Kimberly A. Schonert-Reichl, Jennifer L. Hanson-Peterson, & Shelley Hymel. "SEL and Preservice Teacher Education." *Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning: Research and Practice* 4 (2015): 406-421, 414-417.

[70] Linda Darling-Hammond, Abby CW Schachner, Steven K. Wojcikiewicz, & Lisa Flook. "Educating Teachers to Enact the Science of Learning and Development." *Applied Developmental Science* 28, no. 1 (2024): 1-21, https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2022.2130506.

development empowers educators to become effective SEL champions.

5.4 Engaging Families and the Community

For SEL to have a lasting impact, engaging families and the broader community is crucial. Parents, guardians, and community members play a critical role in reinforcing SEL principles at home and in the wider social context. Schools can facilitate this engagement by providing workshops, resources, and training sessions that help families understand the benefits of SEL and learn strategies for supporting their children's growth.

Workshops can cover topics like effective communication, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation, equipping parents to model and encourage positive behaviours at home. Schools can also provide newsletters, online resources, and interactive platforms for families to access SEL-related information, share experiences, and seek advice. Building strong school-family partnerships creates a consistent environment for students' social-emotional development.

Engaging the broader community in SEL initiatives helps create a culture of empathy, inclusivity, and social responsibility beyond the school. Schools can collaborate with local organisations, businesses, and civic groups for service-learning projects, mentorship programmes, and community events that reinforce SEL competencies. For

[71] Robert J. Jagers, Ashley Griffin Gilchrist, Ally Skoog-Hoffman, & Jeremy P. Jagers. "At the Intersections of Moral Education and Social and Emotional Learning: Some Reflections and Directions for Transformative Social and Emotional Learning." In *Handbook of Moral and Character Education*, 148-164. Routledge, 2024.

example, community service projects addressing local needs—such as environmental clean-ups, food drives, or health awareness campaigns—provide students with opportunities to apply their social-emotional skills in real-world contexts.[72] These experiences help students develop a deeper sense of social responsibility and civic engagement, aligning with the broader goals of transformative education.[73]

6. Challenges and Considerations in Implementing Transformative Education

Implementing transformative education, with a focus on SEL and a holistic approach to student development, represents a shift from traditional education models. While the benefits—enhancing critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and social responsibility—are clear, the practical aspects of implementation present significant hurdles. This section explores these challenges and provides considerations for overcoming them in diverse contexts, such as Nigeria.[74]

6.1 Resistance to Change

Resistance to change is a common barrier in educational reform. In transformative education, resistance can arise from stakeholders, including educators, administrators, parents, and students

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[72] Natasha Raisch, Rebecca Bailey, and Stephanie M. Jones. "SEL Insights: Applying behavioral insights to social and emotional learning programs in global settings." *Social and Emotional Learning: Research, Practice, and Policy* 4 (2024): 100056.

[73] Ugobi-Onyemere, "John Paul II in the Light of Thomas Aquinas…," 42-47. Raisch, et al., "SEL Insights: Applying Behavioral Insights …"

accustomed to traditional models characterised by rote learning, teacher-centred instruction, and exam-focused assessment. For educators, it requires a shift from being knowledge sources to learning facilitators, which can be challenging.[75]

Addressing resistance requires a multi-pronged strategy. First, awareness-building is essential. Schools should organise workshops, seminars, and discussions for all stakeholders to explain the philosophy and benefits of transformative education and SEL. Demonstrating tangible benefits, such as improved student engagement and academic outcomes, and presenting research-based evidence of success in other contexts can build support.

Second, targeted training and professional development are critical. Educators need skills to implement new pedagogies, including differentiated instruction, project-based learning, and SEL integration. Training should cover both the theoretical underpinnings and practical classroom strategies. Involving teachers in co-creating curricula can promote ownership and reduce resistance.

Finally, fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement helps mitigate resistance. Schools should encourage open dialogue, peer support, and reflective practices, enabling educators to share their experiences, challenges, and successes. A supportive environment facilitates a smoother transition towards transformative education.

[75] Michael Fullan, "Change the Terms for Teacher Learning." *The Learning Professional* 28, no. 3 (2007): 35.

6.2 Resource Constraints

Resource constraints are a significant challenge in implementing transformative education. A curriculum integrating SEL, critical thinking, and community-based learning often requires additional resources—such as training materials, professional development programmes, changes to the learning environment, and new teaching aids. In under-resourced settings like Nigeria, securing these resources can be daunting.

To overcome this, schools must adopt strategic resource mobilisation. Collaborating with government agencies is crucial for advocating increased funding and support. Demonstrating the long-term benefits—such as higher achievement, reduced dropout rates, and responsible citizenship—can make a compelling case for financial support.

Partnerships with NGOs, community-based organisations, and the private sector can also supplement resources. These partnerships can provide funding, training, and materials. For instance, NGOs may offer SEL training or support service-learning projects. Engaging the local community can also unlock resources, such as volunteers and expertise, enriching the educational experience.

Schools can also leverage digital technologies and open educational resources (OER) to reduce costs and increase access to high-quality materials. Online platforms provide resources for professional development and SEL curriculum materials, enhancing classroom instruction.

By using technology creatively, schools can address some financial barriers.

6.3 Ensuring Inclusivity and Equity

Inclusivity and equity are fundamental to transformative education. However, achieving these in practice can be challenging, particularly in diverse contexts where students come from different socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Ensuring transformative education is accessible and relevant to all students—including those with special needs, from marginalised communities, or facing economic hardships—requires deliberate planning and inclusive practices.

Differentiated instruction is one strategy to address diverse needs. By tailoring instruction to different learning styles, abilities, and interests, educators can create a more inclusive environment.[76] For instance, in teaching SEL, some students may benefit from visual aids and role-playing, while others may respond better to reflective writing or discussions.

Culturally responsive teaching is also crucial for inclusivity. Educators should recognise and value the cultural assets students bring to the classroom. Integrating local knowledge, cultural heritage, and indigenous wisdom into the curriculum can help students see themselves reflected in their education and feel a sense of

[76] Papiya Sar, "Understanding Learner Diversity: Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Perspective." *Power of Differentiation* (2025): 269- 276.

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belonging.[77] This approach fosters inclusivity and enriches education by exposing all students to diverse perspectives.

Creating a supportive and non-discriminatory school environment is also key to ensuring equity. Policies promoting anti-bullying, non-discrimination, and equal access to resources should be firmly in place. Schools should provide support systems for at-risk students, such as those with learning disabilities, behavioural challenges, or mental health issues. This may include counselling, peer mentoring, and targeted interventions to support social-emotional and academic development.

6.4 Navigating Policy and Curriculum Constraints

Implementing transformative education also involves navigating policy and curriculum constraints. In many systems, including Nigeria's, curricula are often rigid and exam-oriented, leaving little room for innovative methods or SEL integration. Teachers may feel pressured to adhere to prescribed curricula and focus on high-stakes exams, limiting their ability to adopt transformative approaches.

Addressing these constraints requires advocacy at the policy level to adapt national curricula to support transformative education. Policymakers should be informed about its benefits and

[77] Mary Christine Ugobi-Onyemere, "The African Mind and the Primordial Thomistic Principles." IGWEBUIKE: African Journal of Arts and Humanities 10, no. 1 (2024): 73-87, 78-84.
Phineas Phuti Makweya & Medwin Sepadi. "The Crucial Role of Empathy in Fostering Inclusive Learning Environments." In Global Practices in Inclusive Education Curriculum and Policy, 77-90. IGI Global, 2025.

encouraged to create frameworks allowing flexibility and innovation. This could include incorporating SEL competencies into national standards, allowing for project-based assessments, and reducing the emphasis on standardised testing.

At the school level, administrators and educators can explore creative ways to work within existing frameworks while still promoting transformative education. For example, educators can integrate SEL into core subjects by aligning content with national standards but delivering it through methods that promote critical thinking, collaboration, and self-reflection.[79] Schools can also pilot innovative programmes or extracurricular activities focusing on SEL and transformative learning to demonstrate effectiveness and advocate for broader curriculum changes.

7. Conclusion

This paper has examined the transformative potential of education in Nigeria, stressing the urgent need to move beyond traditional, exam-focused models towards a holistic, inclusive, and empowering approach. Transformative education, particularly through Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), provides a framework for rethinking how education can better serve individuals and society. By replacing rote memorisation with approaches that cultivate critical thinking, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and community engagement, transformative education responds to pressing challenges in contemporary systems.

[79] Mary Christine Ugobi-Onyemere, *On Evidence and Indirect Demonstration of the First Realistic Principles in Saint Thomas Aquinas*, (Chișinău: Generis Publishing, 2024), 68-73.

Nigeria's current model, marked by rigid curricula, teacher-centred pedagogy, and overemphasis on examinations, inadequately prepares students for modern complexities. While many leave school academically credentialed, they often lack the skills to manage real-world challenges such as identity crises, socio-economic inequality, and civic responsibility. This disconnect fuels issues like cyber delinquency, digital ego, and limited civic engagement. Transformative education, therefore, is not merely a reform but a redefinition of the purpose of education.

Central to this shift is the integration of SEL, which develops competencies in self-awareness, empathy, relationship-building, and responsible decision-making. Embedding these in daily learning fosters stronger interpersonal relationships, ethical judgement, and social responsibility. Such qualities are indispensable for addressing collective challenges and nurturing responsible citizenship.

Curriculum reforms must also promote critical thinking, problem-solving, community-based learning, and respect for indigenous knowledge systems. Modules in logic, service-learning projects, and culturally responsive teaching can link academic content to real-world application, creating education that is both locally relevant and globally adaptable.

Nonetheless, this transformation faces barriers, including resistance to change, resource constraints, and ensuring equity. Addressing these requires collaboration among educators,

philosophers, policymakers, families, and communities, alongside investment in teacher development and policies that support flexibility, innovation, and inclusivity.

There is no universal model for transformative education. Context-sensitive frameworks are essential, especially in Nigeria, where systemic challenges of equity, access, and cultural relevance persist. By addressing these, education can evolve into a platform that nurtures both intellectual growth and socio-emotional maturity.

In conclusion, transformative educational formation, strengthened by SEL, offers a pathway to liberate learners from the constraints of conventional schooling and the paradoxes of the modern self. By emphasising holistic development, critical engagement, and social responsibility, it can produce empowered, reflective citizens capable of advancing societal progress. Moving forward, collaboration among stakeholders is vital in building an education system that nurtures the learner fully and lays the foundation for a just, equitable, and sustainable future.

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