

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum is an embracing body of subjects set out by teachers and is specially designed to be covered. Specification of objectives is the first step in Curriculum design. Second is the selection of appropriate learning experiences and content. Learning experiences are imparted on the learner so as to solve certain problems in the learner. The problems could be psychological, mental or physiological. The educational program of a curriculum predominantly deals with organization of the content and how it is taught. This goes to explain that curriculum helps to find out the relative skill of the individual as well as the institutional support to the quality of teaching. An instructor's intelligence, clear and thorough understanding of content are expected in good teaching. Clarity must go along with virtuosity at speaking in front of an audience. This is because teaching is unquestionably a performing art. Outstanding teachers make use of their voices, gesticulations and movements to stimulate, draw on and maintain students' attention and emotion. Effective teachers require commensurate levels of internal motivation, personal organization and self-discipline. To enhance instruction, skillful groupings are needed upon which skills are practiced, monitored and groups consequently change in their character, because students receive lessons which are tailored towards their needs.

Key Words: Curriculum, Objectives, Organization, Skillful groupings

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Various scholars, educators and philosophers have put forward opinions, ideas and definitions relating to the concept of curriculum (Williamson, Sewel and McCoy 1976). However, two broad groups of scholars exist. The first group has the traditionalists consisting of the perennialists, the essentialists and the disciplines doctrine advocates. They hold to the traditional conception of the fact that the curriculum is an embracing body of subjects set out by teachers and specifically designed to be covered. The second group has the progressives. They associate the curriculum with the society. The distinguishing views of traditionalists from the progressives is that traditionalists see the curriculum as a body of knowledge, a set of permanent studies which is principally to inculcate discipline of the mind, whereas the progressives do not see why the curriculum should be restricted to the school. They hold the view that the curriculum should not embrace only the school subjects but also other social activities (Igwe, 2000).

Ogunyemi (2006) provides succinct critique and explanation of the meaning of the curriculum as follows:

- Curriculum is the entire state of affairs through which the school makes behavioral changes in persons who go through it;
- The condition that the schools opt for and constantly manage for the purpose of producing change in the behavior of pupils, as a means of building the personality of the child;
- The cycle of experiences set up in the school, for the intention of disciplining children and youths and other members of the school community who are there to be taught applying the best and acceptable customs of thinking and acting. Indeed, curriculum is the totality of experiences offered by the school whether it is carried on in groups or independently, within or outside the school.
- It is the conscious, systematic and deliberate endeavors made by the school to transform the behavior of members of the society in which it is situated.

2.0. CURRICULUM DESIGN

Curriculum design entails what would happen within the school and classroom (Anwuka, 2005). The elements of design in the curriculum are important/integral aspects of the curriculum design. These elements of curriculum

design are interrelated and they include the objectives, the learning experiences and content, the organization of the content, and the evaluation:

a) **The aims, goals and objectives:** The objectives can be either National educational objectives or the curriculum program objectives. They are central to curriculum design because they affirm the intentions and focus of the curriculum. They form the standard against which content materials are selected; they define the outline, and serve as the foundation for instructional procedures that are developed as well as preparation of tests and examinations. Specification of objectives is, therefore, the first step in the curriculum design.

b) **Selection of appropriate learning experiences and relevant content.** Learning experiences are communicated to the learner so as to improve capacity to solve specific problems. The problems could be psychological, mental, physiological or social. They are always related to the curriculum objectives. There is just a thin line between learning experiences and content. Learning experiences should possess the following criteria:

- i. they should be profitable, meet the learners' need;
- ii. they are real;
- iii. they are fundamental to learning of the content;
- iv. they provide opportunities and challenges in the selection of content and must be considered to possess some of the above mentioned characteristics.

In addition, content should be learnable, relevant, significant, balanced, meet the needs and interests of the learner, provide application for old learning and be able to lead to new learning. It must be applicable within the resources of the school and community and also be varied enough to provide for individual differences. The content must gear toward the achievement of the intended outcome and must be appropriate for learning age and level, needs and expectations, and esteem societal norms and values.

c) **The organization of curriculum learning experiences and content:** they are organized, such as to produce major changes in the learners, in the direction of state educational outcomes. They must be organized in a way that fosters the attainment of curriculum objectives. It is when this is achieved that the experiments could be taken as meaningful, complementary, cumulative or reinforcing.

The learning experiences are organized and integrated together into an integral unit known as subject curriculum. Incorporated along with the *subject curriculum* is '*curriculum delivery*'. Organization to a great extent influences the effectiveness of instruction and the amount of learning that occurs. The four elements of curriculum in its design have a cyclic relationship as show in Fig. 1 below:

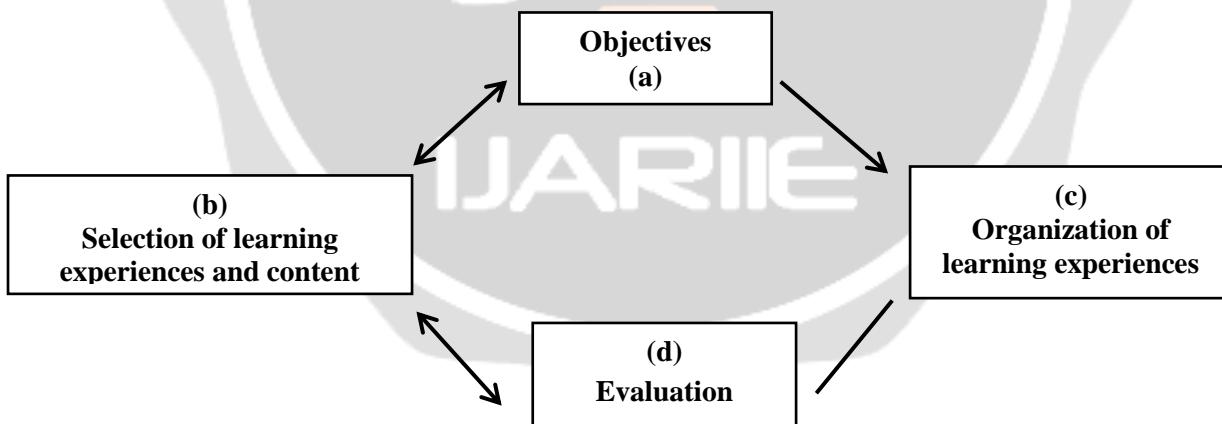


Fig. 1

The interaction among the elements is dynamic such that any alteration or change of any of the elements leads to automatic need for modification of all the others. This implies rather simply that these are not sequential steps, but rather interdependent functions.

Curriculum Design and Development depends on:

- i. how well it is developed
- ii. how well it is implemented
- iii. how well it is maintained.

Curriculum Planning: Involves the task of determining aims and objectives, selection of learning experiences and content of the educational program, organization of the content and how it is taught, and the evaluation of the program

- 2.1. What Constitutes Masterful teaching in the Curriculum Services needed for sustainable development?**
- i. An instructor's intelligence and academic preparation are essential to good teaching (Hoffman, 1979).
 - ii. Foremost among personal characteristics, contributing to teaching of the highest quality is an intelligent, clear and thorough understanding of content.
 - iii. Regardless of degree of talent, however, no person will learn the art of lecturing without practice. Here clearness is necessary but not sufficient. It must go along with virtuosity at speaking in front of groups. Why is this believed to be the case? This is because teaching is unquestionably a performing art. Outstanding teachers use their voices, gestures, and movements to stimulate, draw on and maintain students' attention and emotion (Offorma, 2005).
 - iv. Akin to other performers, teachers must express a strong sense of charisma and presence, and demonstrate verve. Some teachers achieve this by being visibly passionate, lively, or humorous, while others accomplish the same effect with a more reserved, more formal and official style. The capacity to inspire strong positive emotions in their students sets apart the average from the outstanding college teacher.
 - v. Almost any instructor can develop sufficient clarity to be a good college teacher by positively employing and using student feedback.
 - vi. Another quality important in teaching is the ability to explain abstract concepts clearly and simply.
 - vii. Talent clearly plays a role in determining how easily instructors succeed in the classroom.
 - viii. Considerable experience over several years is surely required to become one of the masterful types.
 - ix. Inspiring and exciting teaching is not simply the same as acting or entertaining (Meier and Feldhusen, 1979). Outstanding teaching is typified by spur of emotions prompted by intellectual activity: the thrill of considering ideas that enhance one's understanding of abstract concepts and considering their applicability to one's life, while participating in the process of discovery are essential.
 - x. For a teacher to do an excellent job he or she must be able to do far more than simply present the details of a subject and students seem to know this. They like to receive an overall perspective and love to compare and contrast different concepts in addition to learning individual facts.

A second dimension is rapport, where a classroom is a highly emotional interpersonal arena, in which a wide range of psychological phenomena occur. For example, students' drive to work will diminish if they believe they are disliked by their instructor or they feel manipulated in some way. Generally, students are vulnerable to such distressing emotions, and some students are particularly sensitive to them. Also, some students have a tendency to react emotionally, when they are being confronted and appraised in group settings. Dimension II addresses the teacher's depth of understanding of interpersonal experiences and with his or her expertise at communicating with students in a manner that enhances inspiration, and promotes independent learning. This is done in essentially two ways. The first is to avoid provoking of negative feelings, in particular undue anger and resentment against the teacher. The second is to encourage positive feelings that the instructor has high regard and esteems the students as potentially exceptional individuals capable of performing well in their field of study. The presence of either of these sets of feelings greatly influences students' morale and performance at their assignments and facilitates learning of new material.

Dimension II is an important determinant of success in one-to-one teaching situations. In most settings, however, Dimension II is not as important to outstanding teaching as is Dimension I. It should be noted that Dimension I refers primarily to an instructor activity in the classroom, while Dimension II deals mostly with teacher-student interactions outside as well as inside class.

Dimension II stirs more controversy than does Dimension I. Remarkably, hardly anyone is likely to advocate that teachers be vague and dull; however, some professors may maintain that improving clearness while minimizing ambiguity is all that is requisite for high-quality teaching and criticize "attempts to be exciting or inspiring as inappropriate".

2.2. Interactions to Enhance Instruction: Small groups and Partners for sustainable development

- i) Skills grouping (Gibbons, 1993) is the act of arranging students in groups based on their need for instruction in a specific skill. The criterion for grouping students is based on teacher's identification of a specific instructional need. This significantly augments the delivery of comprehensive input because the lessons are designed to support learning at the students' present level of functioning (Krashen, 1985).
- ii) Skill groups consisting of students with a specific instructional need, for instance, a group of students needing improvement in their use of quotation marks or a group of students who need instruction in solving math problems involving fractions. Skill groups are used effectively in teaching language usage, reading, language arts, and mathematics skills.
- iii) Partner Work (Meyers, 1993) is a form of cooperative learning that is particularly effective with English language learners because of the opportunities for verbal interaction and support it provides (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002). In partner work the teacher places students in pairs of two to accomplish a learning task. They are then given specific instructions and are expected to accomplish a process or product to share with the group and with other pairs. Suggested formats, learning tasks, and paring schemes for partner work are shown in Table 1.

Format	Learning Tasks/Procedure	Pairing Scheme
Think-Pair Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Group discussions, literature studies, problem solving, reviewing of content materials, for tests. – Teacher presents question or task. – Students think about their responses and then share and discuss their responses with their partner. 	One strong English model
Buddy Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading of content material, challenging text. – One student reads, the other listens, or takes notes. – They stop periodically to discuss and create graphic organizer for study. 	One strong reader

Table 1

Peer tutoring (Thonis, 1994) refers to a strategy whereby a student that has already attained certain skill level is paired with another classmate, in order to assist the latter in learning and developing that particular skill. It fundamentally differs from partner work because partners are expected to work together, sharing the responsibilities. The effectiveness of Peer tutoring is attributable to a number of reasons. A peer that has mastered a higher level of proficiency in academic skills and English usage can often support learning by explaining the assignment in the students' first language or through modeling what is expected. The peer tutoring situation often reduces anxiety for the learner because questions can be answered more readily on a one-to-one basis and the students are less likely to be inhibited or to feel afraid. For students and/or peers having the same language background, questions and other concerns could be even addressed in the home language. Peer tutoring also imbues positive feelings of self-esteem and accomplishment in both the tutor as well as in the tutee who in addition gains requisite knowledge and advances in English proficiency.

2.2.1. Step-by-Step Demonstrations for Sustainable Development

The steps in implementing skills grouping are the following:

- Observe and document language levels – set up a method for observing and documenting students' language levels, learning and classroom performance. See Anecdotal records generally kept in class.
- Review needs for instruction
- Design and implement lessons. Design a lesson to teach the skill for which the group has a common need. Explain the skill, model it, and give the group opportunities to practice using the skill under your guidance. As a follow-up to the lesson, give the students an authentic task that requires the use of the skill just taught. Observe the students' use of the skill in the assigned task. Celebrate with students who are using the skill effectively and plan another lesson focusing on the same skill for those students who need more instruction. See. Figure 1.1

2.2.2. Step-by-Step for Sustainable Development

The steps in implementing partner work are the following:

- Group students in pairs – Decide the purpose of the partner work to be alone before you assign the pairs. If language development is one of the main purposes of the paring, make sure one of them can provide a strong English model.
- Identify and train likely tutors– the student acting as a tutor should be trained. Identify students with high proficiency in the course content area and who could potentially tutor other students. Importantly training must be provided to the peer tutors in:
 - Formulating questions that stimulate thinking

- Splitting tasks into manageable portions
- Identifying when it is important to explain in the first language
- Skills that support English vocabulary development
- Matching the students – this involves matching the students who need tutoring with respective peer tutors, while taking into consideration factors such as gender, home/native language, and personality types.
- Modeling the task –one student should be chosen to act as partner in modeling the task and going over the steps to be done. Itemize the tasks to be done on the chalkboard to serve as a guide in the process and as a reminder of the expectations of the overall goals.
- Providing support and practice – circulate among the pairs while the activity is ongoing, providing them with useful feedback on their performance and communication. Pairs who are struggling in their interaction with one another should be supported by intervening and modeling strategies by which they can accomplish their required task.
- Sharing progress – Enable the student pairs with opportunities for sharing their progress and/or results among themselves. Acknowledge their accomplishments and review the language used in their interaction.

2.3. Assessment to Ensure Appropriate Instruction

Small groups and partners should document their work to provide practice in self-evaluation and active involvement of each of the members. Table 2 provides an example of a self-evaluation form that can be used for this process.

Table 2: Self-Evaluation form for Group Work

Group Members	Participation				Achievement				Contribution to groups			
	E	G	F	P	E	G	F	P	E	G	F	P
	E	G	F	P	E	G	F	P	E	G	F	P
	E	G	F	P	E	G	F	P	E	G	F	P
	E	G	F	P	E	G	F	P	E	G	F	P
	E	G	F	P	E	G	F	P	E	G	F	P

NOTE: E=Excellent G = Good F = Fair and P = Poor

3.0. CONCLUSION

Skill grouping is a way to provide focused instruction for small groups of students with shared needs. Because skills groups are created to address a specific need, they are not long-standing groups. Instruction is given, skills are practiced and monitored, and the groups change. If some students require further instructions, that instruction is provided, but only for those who need it. This form of grouping is effective because students receive lessons tailored to their needs and the other students in the class receive assignments that allow them to practice their skills at appropriate levels without being bored by instruction which they do not need.

4.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. College teachers should control group discussion to make it as easy as possible for every student to participate.
2. Wanting students to realize the logical problems of an argument, college teachers sometimes force the process by stating their own position too quickly, and deny students the chance to come to independent conclusions. Thus, requisite skills for teachers in guiding discussions are patience and willingness to let students think on their own.
3. Break up the repetitiveness of lectures by alternating the methods of presentation.
4. Asking a few students to think and speak out loud encourages students to think more fully about content.

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