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Emergent Global Curriculum Trends: Implications for Teachers as Facilitators of Curriculum Change

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Abstract
Curriculum and its' reforms have received increased attention in international policy in recent years as a means to making education relevant to societal changes. Major curricula reforms focus on providing learners with abilities of learning new skills and knowledge for effective living in the midst of rapid technological change. The reforms have given rise to a range of emergent curriculum trends which have significant implications on how teachers should teach. This paper explores and highlights some of the emergent curriculum trends and the implications for teachers who implement the curricula. The implications are informed by an abundance of research examining how teachers, as facilitators can foster students' learning by understanding curriculum theory and processes, providing differentiated differentiation; facilitating learner-centered instruction; utilizing multiple instructional strategies, developing global citizens and lifelong learners, and developing emergent curriculum integration of technologies for curriculum delivery. The paper concludes by pointing to the fact that since emergent curricula trends are geared towards the basic purpose of promoting the full realization of individual's whole life, teachers should align their teaching to correspond to the trend, acquire more knowledge and skills for responsive teaching, meet the needs of students for all-round development and should manifest basic characteristics and direction of curriculum development essential for global citizens.
Keywords: Emergent curriculum, teachers, technology, life-long learning, learner-centered instruction

1. Introduction

Many scholars have given curriculum a variety of definitions depending on whether they view it as a plan, an educational programme, planned and accidental learning experiences, actual occurrences, effects or others. Grundy (1987) regards curriculum as a cultural and social construction and a way of organising a set of human practices. Smith (2000) describes the curriculum as what actually happens in classroom including the transmission of information; attempt to achieve certain ends, process of interactions of students, teachers, knowledge and mileu, and action that are committed in classrooms). Tanner & Tanner (2007: 99) define it as the "reconstruction of knowledge and experience that enables the learner to grow in exercising intellectual control of subsequent knowledge and experience". Curriculum means planned instructional experience designed to help learners develop and extend individual capability. This takes place in schools and is the result of the reconstruction of learners' knowledge and experiences.

One major feature of the curriculum is that it changes to meet emergent realities and needs of the society. Curriculum resembles a dynamic system, where development is an ongoing process that supports teaching and learning and achievement (Mkpa, 2010). Nations must continuously develop curriculum to meet the demands of an ever-changing society, the needs of the children, and the criteria for what students need to learn and do to attain successful outcomes. In other words, the curriculum should meet the demands of some emergent issues.

2. Emergent Trends in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Change is an important component of curriculum dynamics and such changes need to be studied and managed for a better future. With the advent of more innovative ideas and with the advancement of technology, curriculum seems to be changing even more to meet today's needs and realities. Contemporary curriculum changes manifest in a set of inter-related trends or features. Some of these have been identified by Le Métais (2003), Obanya (2009), Mkpa (2010), Priestly (2011) and Yates (2012) as:

- Global developments have significantly influenced national and regional curriculum activities on both fronts: by Millennial Goals and projects related to a 'global citizen'; and by the pervasive influence of international assessments and rankings promoted as authoritative measures of what is being achieved.
- There is a growing recognition that education and the curriculum should prepare students for workplace, citizenship and daily living. Hence teaching and learning processes are being focused on how to prepare students for learning, living and thriving in the dynamic, cluttered, chaotic information environment of these first decades of the 21st century as well as how to prepare students for a changing world.

- Most countries have undertaken major reforms of their curriculum within the past 15 years with increased emphasis on skills and dispositions, which are perceived as relevant to lifelong learning, employment and social participation. Most national curricula incorporate higher order thinking skills, multiple intelligences, technology and multimedia, the multiple literacy of the 21st century and authentic assessments.
- Life-long learning, creativity, Science, Technical and Vocational Education, Mathematics and global citizenship skills are part of the curriculum in all countries. Even in countries where the curriculum is structured in terms of individual subject areas, an interdisciplinary approach to learning is increasingly encouraged.
- Educational content and teaching-learning materials now appear to be more functional, diversified, and operational in nature. An increased emphasis is placed on relevance, flexibility, needs, and competence in curriculum delivery.
- Demographics, population, health, nutrition, and environment are becoming dominant factors in what appears to be a value-oriented instructional design process focused on the global community. Moreover, the very nature of educational structure that drives curriculum and educational methodologies is undergoing a significant change.
- Currently a movement is toward Information and Communications Technology, low-cost, portable handheld devices for student use that can be connected through global networks and tailored for specific tasks or applications. These advancements in technology are leading to a multitude of approaches that are blending a milieu of curriculum that caters to the needs of learners worldwide.
- There is emphasis on the need for teachers to use differentiated curriculum, multiple learning styles and engage in transformational teaching.
- Information professionals have also created directories, in nearly all subjects in the curriculum, of what are viewed as the most useful and appropriate in their respective disciplines. Many online instructional delivery formats have been made available for teachers to access and use in curriculum delivery (for example, schemes of work, lesson plans and ideas, exemplification of learners' work).

Further, many countries have introduced National Qualifications Frameworks; the shift to learning outcomes; and the move from subject specific to generic curriculum criteria. For instance in Nigeria, Obioma (2007:1-2) noted that some key curricular issues in the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) include:

- Identification of minimum competencies and aligning these to the methodology of classroom transactions (including pedagogical skills needed), instructional materials and
- suggested evaluation activities
- Linking learning to the world of work of learners in the cultural context
- Emphasis on functional literacy, numeracy and strategic communication skills.
- Infusion of relevant and functional entrepreneurial skills using the relevant subject contents as drivers
- Consolidation of some contents and subjects in the basic education context thus reducing subject/content overload
- The inclusion of strategic life-long skills as well as positive national values, civic, moral and ethical education as a course of study,
- Infusion of elements of critical thinking Infusion of such emerging issues as HIV/AIDS education, anti corruption studies, capital market studies, etc
- Curriculum made flexible for adaptation to the socially marginalised (including nomadic and other migrant groups), vulnerable communities, adult and special needs learners

The emergent curriculum trends call for new skills, knowledge and ways of learning to prepare students with abilities and competencies to address the challenges of an uncertain, changing world. In curriculum's knowledge-building role, there is a great desire for new global 21st century skills that are necessary foundations in education, and should be concretely should be taught over several years of schooling. This is in line Obanya (2009) who noted that the world is now a knowledge society and more jobs require people to be skilled and knowledgeable workers. Such skills include:

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration across networks and leading by influence
- Agility and adaptability
- Initiative and entrepreneurialism
- Effective oral and written communication
- accessing and analyzing information
- curiosity and imagination

The current trends in curriculum could be characterized by what Priestly (2011:16) called meaningful and constructive forms of emergence in terms of:

- Individual emergence, for example enhanced capacity of teachers to teach.
- Structural emergence, for example the designation of new roles and systems for teachers and schools to facilitate the new policy.
- Cultural emergence, for example the refinement of the policy itself as a result of professional engagement of teachers.

Those having to facilitate the implementation of the emergent curriculum changes taking place are the teachers within the education system who have to adopt new ideologies and implement them in their teaching. Teachers who deliver the curriculum will have to provide learning experiences for holistic development of mind, body intellect and emotions to meet the emergent trends. Unfortunately, most curricular models that address these issues, with their renewed emphasis on the professional input of teachers as developers of the curriculum, have emerged at a time when it appears that capacity for school-based curriculum development is arguably limited. This has several implications for teachers as can be seen in the next section.

3. Implications of Emergent Curriculum Trends for Teachers as Facilitators of Curriculum Changes

The role of teachers in facilitating education in the context of emergent trends in curriculum, teaching and learning is obvious. In a period of great change, the implications and concerns to be addressed by teachers in curriculum and pedagogy have acquired particular urgency (Thiessen et al, 2013). These concerns include understanding curriculum theory and processes, providing differentiated differentiation; facilitating learner-centered instruction; utilizing multiple instructional strategies, developing global citizens and lifelong learners, and developing emergent curriculum integration of technologies for curriculum delivery.

3.1 Understanding of Curriculum Theory and Processes

Teachers need an increased understanding of curriculum theory to ensure quality teaching. Theory describes the transformation process of learning, from data into information; information into knowledge; and knowledge making use of physiological processes, cognitive processes, environmental and cultural processes (Winn, 1997). Understanding the levels of theoretical principles would assist teachers beyond the mere knowledge of the existence of tools and techniques available to a state where teachers selectively use them to devise a solution that meets the demand at the time (Mkpa, 2010). Quality curriculum delivery means having a thorough understanding of the art of curriculum and being able to change roles and responsibilities when needed to meet the new challenges of curriculum design.

It is crucial that teachers have an understanding of curriculum theory if they are truly to evoke educational change in the future. Understanding curriculum theory and processes would provide teachers with an understanding of pedagogy and a capacity for collaborative work (Barret, 2010; Rischin, 2002; Beauchamp & Morton, 2011). Teachers also need to be aware of the cyclical nature of curriculum theory. This is especially true when reviewing needs analysis, methodologies, evaluation, processes, and assessment procedures. Areas of review for teachers of the future should include the following:

- Historical development of curriculum studies
- Current theory and practice in the field
- Macro and micro dimensions in curriculum
- Ethos and cultural considerations
- Process of curriculum change and impact of technology on curriculum
- Models and processes of instructional design
- Models and processes for developing learning strategies
- Identification and implementation of appropriate teaching methods
- Models and techniques of assessment and the evaluation process
- Staff development needs
- Practical application of curriculum design and product as per student to work programs.

(Glathorn, 2005:76)

3.2 Providing for Curriculum Differentiation

Curriculum differentiation is a broad term referring to the need to tailor teaching environments and practices to create appropriately different learning experiences for different students. Hudson (2013:1) finds that:

> figuring out how to differentiate for and include all the students in the class by catering to their individual needs, behavior management, and individual strategies for success and positive relationships, being flexible and organized in groups, are among the challenges that teachers should tackle. There is also the challenge of learning to successfully handle groups and differentiate among the range of learners' abilities in a class.

Teachers are subject areas experts; as such they should enhance the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that all key competencies of a subject area are being met. They should be able to help tailor students' lessons at the class-level, including providing alternate curricular and co-curricular options and adjustments (Beauchamp & Morton, 2011). Teachers should also provide a means for the student to

successfully master the competencies of a course, building a bridge that accommodates individual learner needs and preferences while ensuring programme rigor. Keirouz (as cited in Maheshwari, 2003) suggests the following procedures for enhancing differentiation:

• Deleting already mastered material from existing lesson plans
• Adding new content, process, or product expectations to existing curriculum
• Extending existing curriculum to provide enrichment activities
• Providing course work for able students at an earlier age than usual
• Writing new units or lessons that meet the needs of gifted or underachieving students

The focus here is to create a differentiated learning environment that encourages students to engage their abilities to the greatest extent possible, including taking risks and building knowledge and skills, in what they perceive as a safe, flexible environment.

3.3 Facilitating Learner-Centered Instruction

A further common emergent curriculum trend concerns the positioning of the learner at the heart of schooling. Biesta (2009) refers to this trend as the 'learnification' of education. Such "learnification" reiterates the position of Ross (2000) and Schiro (2008) who believe the purpose of education is to train students in skills and procedures they will need in the workplace. It is about the efficient production of an end product: the educated person. This individual, once successfully completing a programme of learning, will have met the terminal objectives set by educators, and therefore fulfil a role in society. To meet the needs of society, teachers should prepare students to be able to function as mature contributing members by being competent and by being able to perform. Teachers should integrate experiential learning (Knott, Mak & Neill, 2013) to help students to learn how to integrate their new knowledge with existing knowledge (constructivism) and for students to monitor their learning and problem solving (metacognition).

3.4 Utilizing Multiple Instructional Strategies

The emergent curriculum trends require teachers to use several teaching strategies to effectively deliver the curriculum. Of concern to teachers should be how to provide necessary background knowledge and explicit instruction delivered through strategies that match multiple learning styles can provide learning in such a way that accelerates the student's learning to help the student reach certain academic levels in "a timely manner" (Coyne, Kame'enui& Carnine, 2007: 12 - 13). Teachers should select and implement educational strategies designed to help students acquire behaviours prescribed within a programme of learning. Behavioural objectives should be used and students should practice to gain and maintain skills. This would ensure some planned change in the students' behaviour (learning). The role of the teacher is to create and prescribe the sequencing of learning in form of causes and actions leading to the desired responses and reactions.

Teachers should provide multiple instructional strategies should provide learning opportunities where a student uses one or more resources to achieve a learning objective (Conole & Fill, 2005). Formal learning opportunities may include completing set schoolwork, with or without the assistance of a hospital teacher or tutor, participating in group learning opportunities such as reading programmes, or contributing to ward-wide projects. Informal learning opportunities may include playing educational games (e.g., numeracy- or literacy-based games or those involving geography), or information- seeking activities (Internet-based or other). Playing computer games can improve children's literacy, problem-solving skills and overall cognitive abilities, regardless of whether they have been specifically designed for education. Research shows that explicitly teaching strategies results in greater learning (Buell & Sutton, 2008; Coyne, et al 2007).

The utilization of multiple learning styles would among other things, cater for individual learning styles of learners. Teachers should be aware that differences in learning style preferences exist, and should be catered for to become effective in meeting student learning needs. Consideration of learning styles in class preparation and delivery methods increases student success by nurturing diversity within the various fields, promoting self-directed learning, and providing for an emotionally positive learning experience impacting student persistence and learning (Clemons, 2005; Rischin, 2002; Caprara, Vecchione, Alessandri, Gerbino & Barbaranelli, 2011).

3. 5 Developing Global Citizens and Lifelong Learners

The rapid changing of what we know about the world makes life-long learning more important (Aspin, Chapman, Evans, & Bagnall, 2012). Therefore, creating life-long learners who are prepared for both the modern world and the future is another curriculum tasks for teachers. Educating children to become effective citizens is one of the most challenging tasks the teacher has. Furthermore, educating them to realize the essence of being good citizens is yet another. Yates and Grumet (2011) found that in many countries recent times had produced not just a stronger recognition of the need to prepare students for a globally mobile and competitive world, but a concern to rebuild national identities and affiliations in the face of that. For instance in Hongkong, the Curriculum development Council (2000) advocated that teachers and schools should:

provide all students with essential life-long learning experiences for whole-person development in the

domains of ethics, intellect, physical development, social skills and aesthetics, according to individual potentials, so that all students can become active, responsible, and contributing members of the society, the nation and the world.

So the task of teachers should be to enable students to learn how to learn and to be responsible for their own learning. They should have the ability to create effective learning environments that enable the active engagement of students in the learning process thus developing a sense of ownership of the learning process. Tyler (2007) advocates that teachers should help students learn how to learn through cultivating positive values, attitudes, and a commitment to life-long learning, and through developing generic skills to acquire, construct and communicate knowledge. In order to adequately prepare students as global citizens for the current dynamic age as well as for whatever the future holds, teachers must be careful not to limit students to their own current knowledge and perceptions. Instead, they must promote creativity and critical thinking, (Olibie & Akudolu, 2009) so that students must see connections, especially causal, and then be able to synthesize learning into new ideas. These qualities are essential for whole-person development to cope with challenges of the 21st Century.

3.6 Setting Relevant Objectives and Evaluation of Students' Learning Outcome

The emergent curriculum trend is such that educational objectives are formulated keeping in view the all round development of the learners covering both scholastic and non scholastic aspects in the three domains of learning including the cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Evaluation of learning outcomes helps to ascertain the attainment of instructional objectives and as such, plays an integral role in the emergent curriculum trends.

The more impressive developments in classroom instruction have involved large-scale re-considerations of what should happen in the classroom and what teachers should aim to accomplish over the duration of a course. Teachers' objectives should no longer be relatively constrained to helping students to master course content. Teachers' goals should also involve some combination of increasing students' academic self-efficacy (Caprara et al. 2011; Marsh & Martin, 2011), improving their self-regulatory capability (Boekaerts 2002; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011), enhancing their feelings toward learning (Duncan & Arthurs, 2012), and instilling in them values and skills that promote lifelong learning (Aspin et al. 2012).

In assessing these areas of learning, the teacher is required to develop his skills of observation and bring them to full use in the classroom. Also evaluation experts have emphasized the need for classroom teachers to generate and use reliable and valid instruments in assessing non-cognitive learning outcomes. Mkpa (2010) itemized instruments including anecdotal records, rating scales and checklist for assessing non-cognitive outcomes. He notes that these techniques are effective in assessing non-cognitive outcomes because most behaviour indices of learning cannot be appropriately evaluated with paper and pencil technique. Teachers should increasing use these instruments in assessing learners. Teachers need to monitor students' learning and provide them with feedback to improve their performance. In planning evaluation, teachers should use a broad range of strategies appropriately balanced to give students opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and attitudes. The evaluation of students' progress is a very complex process and good teachers should build a wide repertoire of approaches in collecting information about students' learning.

3.7 Integration of Technologies for Curriculum Delivery

Recent advances in the contemporary world, especially in the area of computer technology, have heralded the development and implementation of new and innovative teaching strategies and particularly with the Internet revolution. The importance of access to educational and socialising technologies is obvious. The potential for these technologies to provide innovative approaches to learning is already being widely explored in both traditional and non-traditional educational settings (Excell, 2010). Teachers in the state of Victoria, Australia are using technologies such as social networking websites, web-conferencing, iPod touches and computer games to better engage children and young people in their learning and the two thirds of 14 to 17 year-old young people believed that the Internet played an important role in their life (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2010). Similarly, over 80% of undergraduate college students use email or the Internet at least weekly for course work (Corrin, Lockyer, & Bennett, 2010). Access to these technologies is therefore a significant element of this generation's approach to education, socialising and normalising.

As part of that global change process, teachers need to maximize further advances in technology by utilizing the cooperative learning and differentiated curriculum strategies and combining them with the use of wireless hand-held computing devices. They should be able to adopt sophisticated technology to offer diverse instructional capabilities and the ability to present information in a wide variety of forms. The increasing number of search engines are making searching the www much easy. Teachers should be competent in retrieving through simple word searches. They should have the capability of communicating and exchanging information worldwide with students via classroom workstations and district servers.

4 Conclusion and Recommendations

In Nigeria as in several countries of the world, some efforts have been made to reform the curriculum. The curricular reforms have undeniably brought improvement in education in Nigeria, but the impact has been less than desirable. This is partly due to teacher related issues. If teachers do not rise to emergent curriculum trends and challenges, they might resign students to an undesirable fate.

Providing contemporary content knowledge on emergent curriculum issues to pre-service teachers during the teacher education program can help them develop their pedagogical knowledge and confidence in integrating emergence issues in their future classrooms. Curriculum for teacher education programmes should be enriched should provide sufficient content knowledge, opportunities to practice integration of contemporary issues into the curriculum, guidance from instructors in the lesson planning process, and opportunities to reflect on practicum teaching experiences. There is also a need to provide serving teachers in-service seminars and workshops as well as professional development courses to enhance their professional competence and understanding of emergent curriculum. More technological resources should be provided to schools to help teachers improve and implement their curricula. Teachers, too, should be prepared to use modern technologies in order to build classrooms where students are engaged and motivated. It is also recommended that more classroom action research be conducted to develop teaching and learning strategies to enhance students' generic skills and the assessment strategies of such skills. Teachers should seek for more knowledge using research and scholarship for improved teaching and learning. The teachers should also develop emergent curriculum and nurture teaching and learning environments that provide learner-centered learning, differentiated curriculum with supportive learning experiences for students. They should provide assignments tailored for students of different levels of achievement, differ the pace of instruction and have high expectations for all students. They should also structure class assignments so they require high levels of critical thinking and allow for a range of responses and put students in situations where they don't know the answer–often. Finally, the teachers should be trained to become multi-skilled in order to utilize multiple Instructional Strategies and develop learners as global and creative citizens.

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