

Teaching Curriculum and Instruction to the Undergraduate Students at Umaru Musa Yar'adua University Katsina State Nigeria

Abubakar Sani¹

Abstract

Curriculum, whether defined as a plan for achieving a goal or a field of study, has crucially affected the life of both teachers and students in school premises. Based on this notion, a course titled 'curriculum and instruction' is introduced for the second year Education students (200 level students) at Umaru Musa Yar'adua University to equip them with two basic ideas regarding the field. First, to introduce them to the various definitions of curriculum, its domains, foundations, principles and most likely current and evolving issues to be considered in curriculum planning and development. Second, the course aims at bringing into the cognizance of the learners about the distinction between teaching and instruction; and how the two help teachers in delivering curriculum content. The course immensely helps to the extent that at the end of second year, majority of the Education students are able to define basic concepts in the field of curriculum; explain different methods of teaching and how they have paramount influence in terms of delivering curriculum content.

¹ Faculty of Education, Department of Education, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University Katsina, Nigeria, Email: kofarguga@gmail.com

Keywords: Curriculum, Instruction, teaching, methods of teaching, pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

For long period, scholars have been exerting tremendous efforts to conceptualize the term 'curriculum' and likewise, to elucidate its salient and unique features in meeting school's goals. Thus, some define it as all learning experience that students gain under the guidance of a school; and the main purpose is to shape the student's understanding, worldview and make them become useful to the larger society. For others, it is defined as a field of study, with its domains, principles, foundations and issues; in spite that it is 'confusing' 'indefinable' and 'fragmentary' in nature. They expatiate that the field's horizon includes elements of philosophy, psychology, sociology and history. This makes it to look so vague and irritating for students at both tertiary and undergraduate level. However, this uniqueness of curriculum indicates its richness and all-inclusive that it tends to be. Digesting the concept of curriculum broadly, reveal explicitly the type of people involved and the materials involved (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Sequel to this, a course titled 'Curriculum and Instruction' is introduced for second year undergraduate students at Umaru Musa Ya'radua University, Katsina State, Nigeria in order to equip them with the skills and appropriate knowledge in the area of curriculum, which primarily concern about knowing the rudiments ideas about the field.

More so, one of the intrinsic elements in both curriculum development and planning is the expertise's caliber to understand the nature and differences between aims, goals and objectives. These terms are being used interchangeably by some scholars and the usage becomes so crucial in achieving instructional objectives (Ornstein & Pajak, 2007). Generally, goals are perceived as long-term aims to be achieved, whereas, objectives are categorized as specific learning outcomes that result from current instruction. Hence, this course aims

to enable second year undergraduate students of education department to demarcate between these terms.

Contextually, there are various methods of teaching and each is often designed to suit a unique classroom instruction (Taylor & Francis, 2009). Teaching methods are described as techniques and means through which teachers deliver the curriculum content. These include lecture method, demonstration method, discussion method, problem-solving method excursion method, project method and play-way method (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun, 2008 p.558). Consequently, this course (curriculum and Instruction) is as well designed to trained students about these techniques and their applicability in appropriate and unique context.

Furthermore, curriculum components such as objectives, content, learning experience, instructional materials and evaluation are of paramount importance in the area of curriculum planning (Henson, 2001 p.411). Hence, this course (Curriculum and Instruction) part of its aims, intends to equip the students with the knowledge about the importance of the mentioned components. Therefore, subsequent paragraphs provide details on the nature, aims, scope and content, methods of assessments and relevant textbooks for the course.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION ON THE NATURE OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES PROGRAMS

Nigeria as one of the developing nations in Africa has its unique if not different policies of education when compared with other developed countries. In Nigeria, the duration for undergraduate programs is normally four years with the exception of some courses like Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, law and others. In this respect, it is a culture in the country to refer year one as 100 level, year two as 200 level, year three as 300 level and year four as 400 level. In addition, for any program at either undergraduate or postgraduate level there are courses prescribed as core, which every student must offer and pass before

graduating from the University. In line with this, the course 'curriculum and instruction' is a compulsory course for every second year education student.

AIMS OF THE COURSE

The Course aims are to

- Enable the students understand the origin and concept of curriculum and its relevance to education.
- Enable the students to know about the types/definitions of curriculum
- Enable the students to understand approaches in defining curriculum.
- Help the students to know about the components and sources of curriculum design
- Enable the students to understand the difference between aims, goals and objectives in curriculum development
- Enable the students to understand the foundation, principles and issues in curriculum planning
- Enable the students to differentiate about teaching and instruction and their relationships to curriculum
- Understand the nature and relevance of different methods of teaching in delivering the curriculum content
- Enable the students to understands the curriculum domains and steps in curriculum planning
- Enable the students to understand the roles of curriculum worker

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE COURSE

- ✓ Definition of Curriculum
- ✓ Curriculum Approaches
- ✓ Foundations, principles and Issues and Trends of curriculum
- ✓ Curriculum Domains
- ✓ Types of curriculum

- ✓ Curriculum Development and its Models
- ✓ Curriculum Design
- ✓ Components and sources of curriculum Design
- ✓ Design Dimension considerations
- ✓ Steps in curriculum planning
- ✓ Theory and Practice in curriculum Planning
- ✓ The roles of the curriculum worker
- ✓ Goals, aims and Objectives in curriculum Development
- ✓ Definitions of Instruction, Teaching and their relationship
- ✓ Teaching methods as a Means of deliberating curriculum
- ✓

HOW I TEACH THE COURSE

The course is prescribed as core, for which every second year (200 level) student of Education must offer at first semester and pass before graduating from the university. As a lecturer who teaches the course, I normally prepare my lecture two weeks before the commencement of the semester; because the Education Department provides us with the course distribution attached with its content. Hence, I prepare comprehensive lecture note mainly for the students to read during exams; and I prepare my power point slides for at least three classes. The former enables the students to be carried along during the lecture, promote critical thinking and makes them read much before the next class. While the later, saves me from some extraneous variables that may come across and distort my attention. So at least I always prepare ahead of time.

During the lecture, I present the topic to the students in form of layman's questions towards the meaning, importance and types of curriculum. This is because it is the first time the students are coming across the course; thus, they need to have a clear view of it so that they would appreciate it. I ask them questions such as 'who dictates the courses to be taught in both primary and secondary schools and even in our institutions?' 'Why do we sometimes prefer having more Science students to Arts students?' 'Why do teachers use different ways to teach

different subjects - some concentrate on narrating stories, some want the students to commit some texts to memory and others want the students to do things by themselves?'With questions like these thrown at the class and their individual responses coming, I understand how much the students know about the relevance of curriculum to educational system. I know some of their answers may be out of observation and others out of mere guess, this paves way for me to formally introduce the concept of curriculum and its relevance to education.

I begin by giving them simple definitions of the course, its aims and digesting the meanings in every definition so that they may not just memorize the meanings, but also see through. As the lecture progresses, I throw questions in relation to what I have just explained. Some questions need more explanation or more examples besides the ones I have given.

I use the overhead projector to project diagrams, picture, models or tables that may facilitate understanding. I seldom read from the note but explain in detail using simple language and with copious examples of incidences. I always want them to see the course as something that happens in our life, the mistakes or shortcomings of previous curricular, which necessitated the need for improvement or innovation. Likewise, when it comes to teaching methods, we cite examples with other subject related to specific teaching method e.g. Maths for problem solving.

To make the lesson interactive, I point out some apparent discrepancies among writers' theories or approaches to a topic. This does not only highlight the differences but also improve in their understanding of the practical aspects of the approaches. In addition, to assess my students, I give them assignments that they later present before the whole class and answer questions from the audience and me as well. I award them marks based on the content quality of their work and ability to present well before the class.

I design the lecture notes in such a way they will be treated weekly and finally what they will study on their own to face the examination.

The presentation will cover 30% of their marks while attendance attracts 10% and the examination goes with 60%.

ASSESSMENT METHODS AND DURATION OF THE COURSE

Education students offer the course at second year in first semester; and it is two (2) credit unit. In addition, the methods of assessment for the course include both formative and summative assessments. The former involves classroom presentations, mini-projects, assignments and test. The later involves semester examination.

SUGGESTED MAJOR BOOKS FOR THE COURSE

1. Curriculum foundations, principles, and Issues By Allan C. Ornstein and Francis P. Hunkins
2. The Curriculum Studies Reader By David J. Flinders and Stephen J. Thornton.
3. Contemporary Issues in curriculum By Allan C. Ornstein, Edward F. Pajak and Stacey B. Ornstein
4. Fundamentals of curriculum: Passion and professionalism By Decker F. Walker

References

Flinders, D.J., and Thornton, S.J. (2009). *The curriculum Studies reader* 3rd Edn. London: Routledge Taylot & Francis

- Henson, K.T. (2001). *Curriculum Planning. Integrating Multiculturalism, Constructivism, and Education Reform*. 2nd Edn. New York: Boston Burr Ridge
- Joyce, B.R., Weil, M. and Calhoun, E. (2008). *Models of Teaching* . 8th Edn., Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Ornstein, A. C., Hunkins, F. P. (2009). *Curriculum Foundations, Principles, and Issues*. Boston: New York San Francisco
- Ornstein, A. C., Pajak, E. (2007) *Contemporary Issues in Curriculum*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.