



ROLE OF TEACHER'S IN CURRICULUM CONSTRUCTION AND TRANSACTION – SEARCH FOR BETTER FUTURE

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Abstract

The term curriculum used in a number of ways by parents, educators and businesses. Some see curriculum as the “academic stuff that is done to children in school.” Teachers themselves use the term in different ways depending on their views and needs. In any school staffroom one may hear statements about curriculum such as the following: “The kids are really making progress since I began modifying the curriculum to better meet their needs.”

Curriculum does not mean only the academic subjects traditionally taught in the school, but it includes the totality of experience that a pupil receives through the manifold activities that go on in the school, in the classroom, library, laboratory, workshop, play-grounds and numerous informal contacts between teachers and pupils. In real sense, the whole life of the school becomes the curriculum, which can influence the life of the students at all points and help in the development of a balanced personality. The exploration of knowledge and advancement of technology have enhanced the role of responsibilities of teacher. The teachers have therefore to remain ‘aware and awake’ towards social needs and new developments. While it is essential that classroom interactions terminate in the achievements of the desired competencies in the pupil, it is highly desirable on the part of the teacher that he inculcates the spirit of inquiry and right attitudes to apply his knowledge to

life situations, leading to inculcations to the habit of lifelong learning among his pupils. The learning process is no more restricted to teacher talks students receive concept.

Key Words: Teacher, Curriculum Construction, Transaction and Better Future



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Introduction:

The teacher is the principal agent in implementing educational programs and appropriately transacting the curricula in the classroom. The teacher has to create a suitable congenial learning environment whereby the students can investigate, question, discuss and seek guidance for arriving at the appropriate solution of the problems. NPE-1992 states that “The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society” it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. The government and the community should Endeavour to create conditions, which will help motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines. Teachers should have the freedom to innovate, the device appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs and capabilities of and the concerns of the community”.

Jackques Delors Report, “Learning: The Treasure within” (UNESCO, 1996) also emphasis that teachers are instrumental in the development of attitude positive or negative to learning. Teachers can awake curiosity, stimulate independence, encourage intellectual vigor and create conditions for success as an agent of change; promoting understanding and tolerance that has never been obvious than today.

Concept of Curriculum:

“A curriculum is a definition of what is to be learned. The origins of the word are from the Latin “Curriculum” a racing chariot, from which is derived a racetrack, or a course to be run, and from this, a course to study”. (Ross, 2000).

The term curriculum is used very widely in the literature to refer instructionally related educational experiences of students. It encompasses educational philosophy, values, objectives, organizational structure, materials, teaching strategies, students’ experiences, assessment and learning outcomes (Leithwood, 1981).

A school curriculum consists of “all those activities designed or encouraged within its organizational framework to promote the intellectual, personal, social and physical development of its pupils. It includes not only the” formal” program of lessons but also the “informal” program of extra-curriculum activities as well as those features which produce the

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school ethos such as the quality of relationship, the concern for equality of opportunity, the values exemplified by the way the school sets about its tasks and the way in which it is organized and managed. Teaching and learning styles strongly influence the curriculum and in practice cannot be divorced from it". (Skilbecn, 1990).

Concepts of curriculum construction :

The term "Curriculum Development, "Curriculum Planning", "Curriculum Design" (together with the more antiquated terms "Curriculum making" and "Curriculum construction") are used more or less interchangeably to refer to the processes and decisions involved in specifying a curriculum plan. (The International Encyclopedia of Education, 1994, P-1322).

Curriculum design refers to as 'the act of creating curriculum in schools. This may involve the purchase of text books, (One kind of work plan and curriculum) and/or the writing of curriculum guide (another kind of work plan), and neither may be well connected to the other. This presents a real problem in considering the 'alignment of curriculum' to the tests in use. School officials like to believe that teachers follow curriculum guides when in fact research reveals they are much more likely to be dependent upon the textbook as the actual day-to-day work plan or real curriculum. Curriculum delivery refers to any act of implementing, supervising, monitoring, or using feedback to improve the curriculum once it has been created and put into place in schools.'" (Fenwick, 2000).

Teacher's Role in Curriculum Development:

Before discussing the role of teachers in curriculum development, it would be worthwhile to discuss their role in the curriculum planning – a stage preceding curriculum development. It has been noted that curriculum planning involves a series of steps, namely:

1. Specification of goals
2. Setting curriculum objectives,
3. Choice of curriculum inputs reflecting these criteria and designed on certain specific scheme of studies.
4. Determining the suitable transaction strategies and appropriate evaluation scheme.

How are these steps actually determined in curriculum development? Who takes the crucial decisions in this regard? What roles do the teachers play in determining the various steps involved?

In the process of curriculum development teachers play some significant role. But the most significant questions: How many teachers can actually participate in this process? Are the existing provisions for teacher participation in curriculum planning adequate and satisfactory? Under the existing arrangements, the involvement of practicing teachers in curriculum planning process is not significant.

It is now recognized that the teachers should be given more extensive and role in curriculum planning. Apart from curriculum planning, there are other stages where in teachers are involved. These are curriculum development, curriculum delivery, and curriculum evaluation or review. The process of curriculum development (design) normally begins with the task of determining the specific objective of teaching a particular course of the program followed by writing content outlines; specification of relative weight ages for different content items within a courses; in terms of instructional time allocation, selection of the teaching – learning strategies such as classroom teaching, practical, demonstrations, field work self-study, group activities etc.; development of instructional, reading material, etc; and specification of evaluation procedures. Here the question arises is what role practicing teachers play in these exercise? The preparations of curriculum outlines entail experimental exploration in course formulation teaching activities as well as in the evaluation procedures. The profession of teaching demands that every teacher should give serious thought of these issues and ensure their active involvement in the process of curriculum building. School situation and the community around offer tremendous opportunities to teachers to experiment innovate and explore new areas of teaching.

The curriculum demands active efforts on the part of the teacher to bring about more insights, greater knowledge, and increased enthusiasm in the pupils for learning. When teachers do not from part in the process of curriculum change, they would not be inclined in implementing the changes.

The overall responsibility curriculum development in all countries lies with governments. In most countries curriculum development is relatively centralized. The countries like China, Fiji, Thailand, Maldives, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand all report highly centralized curriculum development process. Though the final decision is made at the government level, the teachers, teacher unions and others stakeholders are consulted before and during the development process. In

the countries such as Australia, France, New Zealand and Philippines, systematic inputs few teachers on policy development; training and reviewing curriculum are obtained.

Teacher's Role in curriculum Transaction :

Curriculum delivery, after its development, is the most critical issue in the entire process of curriculum management. The process generally involves teachers, student and contents of the curriculum. The contents to be learned by the students, are essentially contained in the textbooks, workbooks etc. And it is the teacher's responsibility to teach these contents to the students. Curriculum delivery / transactions are a systematic process in which every component, i.e. teachers, students' material and learning environment is crucial to successful learning. This perspective of curriculum delivery is usually referred to as the system approach to design instruction. The classroom teaching which a major component of curriculum delivery is needs to be tailored according to the demands of the reality. In normal conditions, each has at least one teacher with adequate teachers-pupil ratio. However, developing countries face the problem of multi grade and large classroom settings demanding different strategies of curriculum delivery. Also, the classroom teaching-learning is not merely limited to the use of talk, chalk and board. Rather, it is being supplemented by audio-video aids and computer aided instructions using pen drive also, it would therefore, be appropriate to discuss teachers role in curriculum delivery in three sub-sections:

- 1) Curriculum transaction in normal classroom.
- 2) Curriculum transaction in multi-grade contexts
- 3) Use of Information Technology in Classroom Teaching.

1) Curriculum Transaction in Normal Classroom:

In the beginning of the transaction process, the teacher seeks answer to many questions such as: what I am going to teach? How much matter should I include in a particular (syllabus) course unit? What are the contents for each session of the course? How to arrange the topics and sub-topics of the course? Am I going to follow a definite rule, procedure while transacting these topics? Have I allotted sufficient time for each of these topics and subtopics? What type of methods and media am I going to use? What sort of instructional strategies and evaluation procedure am I going to adopt for teaching these contents? The answer to such questions identifies several of teacher's curriculum transaction. For instance certain course may demand that the whole transaction of the course be done only through field work or, even within a course, it may be essential such as practical work, classroom

lecture, assignment etc., for the effective delivery places varying demands on the time and the other limited resources available. For example, transacting a content unit through classroom lecture may place very limited demand on the time; human resources, etc. however, if the same is to be transacted through practical exercise, depending on the specific objective, the resource requirement will drastically differ. Similarly, carrying out field work will not only require longer duration of students' involvement but also change the role of a teacher significantly. Any instructional strategy that a teacher adopts in a classroom must conform to their personal style of teaching, and the model or models of teaching who prefer to work closely with students. Hence, one should analyze the particular style of teaching and the model that those finds most suitable for their particular style. A teacher should be much more open minded and expand their efficiency by using difference models of teaching rather than a single model of teaching.

As a catalytic agent teacher structures the internal working of classroom and also gives direction to his/her pupils. The leadership style of teachers such as establishing relationship with students and setting the classroom communication channel, working procedures and rule enforcement supplemented with use of power denotes the climate for students learning. However, differences are observed in terms of the way they structure the classroom environment. A competent teacher manages the time available in school most effectively; recognized and provides for individual differences among learners, including children who are gifted as well as those who are weak; organizes and manages teaching and learning through a combination of class, group and individual activities appropriate to the needs of learners, the level of study and the nature of the subject matter; provides a stimulating and effective environment for learning through good class organization and display; and uses the environment and the children's direct experience as a resource for learning.

Several studies have shown that there is improvement in the students' achievement where the teaching is well organized and the teachers are absolutely clear about their objectives. Effective learning occurs where teachers clearly explain the objective of the lesson at the outset and refer to them throughout the lesson to maintain the focus. The information of the lesson should be structured in such a way that it begins with an "overview" and the main ideas of the lesson are reviewed at the end. Joyce and Showers (1988) noted that the more effective teachers teach the classroom as a whole-present information or skills clearly and animatedly, keep the teaching sessions task-oriented, are non-evaluative and keep instructions

relaxed, have expectations for achievement and relate comfortably to the students with the consequence that they have behavior problems.

Tangyonget. Al. (1989), identified some desired behavioral attributes of teachers, namely logical and flexible planning of work; encouraging children to think critically; better recognition of individual differences between children and the range of ability within classes; encouraging creativity in children; to link learning with living in the community; differentiating the needs and interest of older and younger children; and encouraging co-operation and mutual self help among them.

Different kinds of materials are developed for the implementation of curriculum. The material support is primarily of two types; textbooks and teaching / learning materials. In majority of the countries there has been a shift from teacher centered instructions to child centered learning. This also involves encouraging problem-solving, creative thinking, learning to learn, and activity based classroom programs. "Pupil practice" is enhanced when teachers are sensitive to the learning styles of the pupils and where feasible the teachers identify and use of appropriate strategies. In many cases, this requires flexibility on the part of the teachers in modifying and adapting their teaching styles. A large number of studies have revealed that there is a strong relationship between high expectations among teachers and effective learning. High expectations correspond to a more role of teachers in helping pupils to learn more and a strong sense of efficacy.

Reinforcement is an important element of effective in teaching and learning process. Good discipline in classroom helps in effective learning. Frequent use of punishment by teacher can create a sense and negative atmosphere affecting attendance and behavior of the children and thus has adverse effects. On the contrary, praise and appreciation had a positive relation with pupil behavior and to some extent increase their academic achievement and attainments. Another factor for low achievements, new teaching techniques, use of difference instructional materials and use of different distinguished procedures. One important issue related to the teacher's role in the implementation of the curriculum is learning assessment of the studies. A variety of strategies are used to assess students learning which provides feedback to the teachers with respect to the effectiveness of their teaching and also provides students and parents essential information about the students progress.

2) Curriculum Delivery in Multi Grade Schools :

Multi grade schools contain students of different ages and abilities in one classroom under the direction of one teacher. For example bridge course in some part - Running schools for child labor. They take a variety of organizational forms, ranging from a grouping of several formal grades/ divisions under the direction of one teacher to completely non-graded learning environment. Multi grade schools differ from 'traditional schools', where each class is typically made up of a distinct grade with its own teacher and a classroom.

Appropriate pedagogical training and materials are both critical for successful multi grade teaching. As regards approaches to classroom teaching, a multi grade teacher has to know and use techniques and strategies to ensure that every child in his/her multi grade class makes satisfactory progress. In the multi grade context the teachers has to make use of greater flexibility in teaching strategies, create congenial learning climate, getting senior pupils to help junior pupils, make group based on ability, engage some groups in co-curricular activities, adjust available time most effectively. To build successful multi grade schools, teachers need to develop a wide repertoire of teaching techniques and classroom management practices. They require sufficient and appropriate instructional material and physical facilities and local and regional professional support. Students may receive less individual attention, and most often work independently. Student achievement in single grade school if multi grade programmers are not supported with the required resources and if teachers are not properly trained. Given the limited facilities and other constraints, a teacher in multi grade context plays a very important and solitary role in making their classroom instruction effective. In fact, the teacher job is not confined to the classroom teaching only.

Use of Information Technology in Curriculum Transaction:

The most important and challenging role of the teacher is the selection of the media or medium that would like to use in the classroom. Teachers are often not able to decide by themselves on the selection of the media/medium. At the outset, this decision is highly dependent upon a thorough knowledge of:

- 1) What is being taught?
- 2) How it to be taught?
- 3) How it can be tested? : and
- 4) Who are the learners?

Research findings suggested a variety of teaching media, which are available, not only motivate the learners, but also make the process of teaching easier and more effective. These include both print and non-print media.

The developments in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have brought about paradigm shift in the methods of transaction or delivery of the context in the classroom processes. This requires proper technological skills and right attitude on the part of the teacher. The learners cannot derive optimal benefits from the Computer Based or Mediated Learning Resources if the teachers themselves are not trained properly and are not sufficient motivated.

It requires a shift in teachers' responsibilities from merely teaching academic subjects to the teaching of social and interpersonal skills. The delivery of education via online course is set to change the entire landscape of course development and control mechanism on delivery of instructions. Thus, the role of teachers will evolve into one that combines the skill of a social worker, and a facilitator providing one-to-one mentoring. Several studies have indicated that the Computer Aided Instruction (CAI) is more effective for individualized interactive instruction as it helps to improve knowledge. Understanding and application level capabilities of the pupils'. Effective use of technological aids and approach allowing students greater autonomy and exploration and creatively towards attainment of larger development goals. The technology rich learning environment is characterized by collaborative and investigative approaches helping in integration of content across the curricula promoting conceptual understanding. The teacher and students become co-learners in the co-operative learning environments to benefit from the ICT classroom situation.

To suitably harness ICT resources, the teachers will have to be trained suitably to cope with the change. Further, the appropriate use of modern technology in School Curriculum World reduces the work load to teachers. Thus, the role of teacher in ICT based instruction can be described as Facilitator, Synthesizer, Modeler, Co-explore, Instigator and Helper.

Conclusion:

Hence, Teachers can contribute by collaboratively and effectively working with curriculum development teams and specialists to arrange and compose material, textbooks, and content. Teacher involvement in the process of curriculum development is important to align content of curriculum with students needs in the classroom. During the

curriculum process, teachers consider how they can incorporate student choice into classroom learning. Teachers can help students connect content to an individualized plan that reflects a career interest. Project-based learning is a dynamic option that teachers must plan in advance, during the curriculum process. This hands-on technique immerses students in a practical project that brings alive the classroom curriculum. Providing a wide variety of learning options speaks to the needs of all students and optimizes learning potential. Teachers use the curriculum process to plan and coordinate student choice options. With the minimal facilities available to teachers, the teacher has to be creative and resourceful.

Teacher uses his or her discretion in such a way that teacher can give maximum attention to each people, minimize wastage of time and energy and get every child engaged as much as possible to some kind of learning activities. The teacher relates the subject matter taught to the daily activity of the children and their local environment. The teacher must always be effortful and keen to enhance his own competency and to improve his teaching style. Without doubt, the most important person in the curriculum implementation process is the teacher. With their knowledge, experiences and competencies, teachers are central to any curriculum development effort. Better teachers support better learning because they are most knowledgeable about the practice of teaching and are responsible for introducing the curriculum in the classroom.

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