

SCHOOL LEADERS' PRACTICES IN ENHANCING CURRICULUM IN THE PHILIPPINES IN RESPONSE TO GLOBAL COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

Dr. Edna C. Aquino
Rizal Technological University

Dr. Luisito C. Hagos
New Era University

Dr. Natividad F. Halog
Philippine College of Health and Sciences

Engr. Muhammad Asif Jamil
De La Salle University

- Curriculum is a broad set of experiences that students go through during the entire time they are in school. Curriculum empowers all students and motivates them towards lifelong learning. But because of technological advancements, the spread of new information media and the predominance of software and hardware devices, a school's curriculum should be enhanced. It should be pragmatic to meet the needs of society and should conform to the actualities of the community. A school's curriculum should be re-structured with a likely shift towards a more meaningful course of study.

It is indeed very important for an educational institution to have a balanced and well-designed curriculum for all the programs it offers. In doing so, the institution shall have a more stable system in undertaking its goals and mission so as to make its curricular programs efficient and effective to its major concern – the students.

■ Curriculum Design: Basic Concepts

According to Monterozo (2010), curriculum design is basically concerned with the nature and arrangement of the four basic curriculum parts. These four components generally suggest to the curriculum maker four questions: What is to be included? What instructional strategies, resources and activities will be employed? What subject matter is to be included? And what methods and instruments will be used to appraise the result of the curriculum?

■ **Factors that Influence the Curriculum**

The world is changing so fast that in order for schools and universities cope with new innovations, they should keep at pace with the tempo of societal changes and technological progress. The schools of today should participate in the educational and social revolution. Thus, the curriculum in Philippine schools today has to be geared to the rapid societal changes and the new responsibilities for the new breed of Filipinos.

■ Re-structuring the Curriculum

Several colleges and universities are now beginning to shape curriculum for the future in an attempt to address the realities and changes in the global community in the 21st century. They have initially envisioned the future curriculum to be computer-based, research-oriented, value-laden, community-involved, environment-focused, technology-enriched and industry-linked.

1. Computer – Based

Technology is rapidly changing many aspects of society. Schools, as they exist today, need to closely examine the educational needs and goals of our students and how we can best meet these needs and goals. It is believed that students of today need many different skills to be able to learn, work and adapt in our ever-changing world. School administrators are doing its best that subjects in the curriculum should be computer-based to meet the rapid advancement of technologies.

A lot of computer software is already available in the market in almost all subjects in medicine, engineering, education, business, nursing, architecture, etc. Current computer applications for classroom instruction vary and include Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI), Computer-Managed Instruction (CMI), and Computer-Mediated Education (CME). The emphasis has since progressed to having students gain knowledge from the computer.

2. Environment – Focused

The continuing degradation of the environment has captured the attention of concerned citizens around the globe. Integration of environmental education in selected curricular programs is very important especially for a developing country like the Philippines. Students must become “earth-friendly” and commit to environmentally sound lifestyle.

In 1992, President Fidel V. Ramos signed Executive Order No. 15 that answers the call for global action on the state of the environment. He created the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development that adopted the Philippine Agenda 21 which takes a balanced and integrated approach to development issues by incorporating sustainable development principles and concepts aligned with the national priorities of the government.

One of the strategies of Philippine Agenda 21 is the promotion of environmental education, information and public awareness. This strategy reinforces P.D. 1152 or the Philippine Environment Code of 1977 that mandates the integration of environmental education into the core curriculum of all academic levels.

Agenda 21 recognizes the fact that both formal and non-formal environmental ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behavior are consistent with sustainable development.

As approved, a 2- or 3– unit subject, preferably with the descriptive title “Introduction to Environmental Science”, is offered as compulsory subjects in all baccalaureate programs in the Philippines. Among the most popular descriptive title of the course as recommended by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) are:

Environmental Management

Environmental Science

Waste Management

Industrial Waste Control

The topics outlined by the TPEAME include the following:

Principles of Ecology

Sustainability Concept

Global Environmental Issues

Environmental Impact Assessment

Water and Waste Water Engineering

Air Pollution

Solid Waste Management

Waste Minimization

Noise Pollution

Thermal Pollution

3. Research – Oriented

Research plays an important role in the teaching and learning process. Research also helps find solutions for complex problems. Research enables educators to identify outcomes, make predictions and establish cause-and-effect relationships. Assigning research work to students will give them the opportunity to learn by themselves with minimal supervision from their teachers.

By conducting research, students will have a first-hand experience of applying the principles of scientific methodology and hence make them better decision-makers in the future. Educators are encouraged to help their students' develop research attitude (Baratang, 2003) by instilling in them the so-called "Problem-Orientedness" attitude.

The following are worthy school-based related researches (Hagos, 2007) from different universities:

- A study in 2012 conducted by Electronics and Communications Engineering students from the College of Engineering and Technology of New Era University on the development of solar-powered mobile phone charger.

The establishment of the Central Philippines University – affiliated Non-Conventional Energy Center (CPU-NEC) in December 1989 to introduce, transfer, and encourage the utilization of technically and economically viable non-conventional energy systems that are safe, cleaner and more sustainable than the conventional fuel based system. Guimaras islands were the target areas. This was established through the joint effort of the Electrical Engineering students of CPU and the Department of Energy.

A student from Rizal Technological University conducted a study in 2002 on the “Immobilization of Toxic Heavy Metals from Academic Wastes” such as copper, nickel, manganese, cadmium, lead and mercury by establishing a mix design between academic waste, waste, fine and coarse aggregate.

4. Technology – Enriched. The positive impact of technology is not limited to business, government and medicine but extends to education as well. The advances in communication and information technology are radically altering the shape and delivery of learning throughout the world. Technological innovations have reshaped societies and affected men's life. It is likewise revolutionizing and globalizing education to meet business and industry needs.

Realizing that technology is the most important area, which the students must master, to succeed in the 21st century, many colleges and universities have begun to install technological facilities in the campus. Computers, CD-ROMs, the Internet. e-mail, television monitors, video equipment, and satellite systems for distance learning are some of the technologies that schools have begun to use. These technological devices interconnect, enabling students to maintain continuous links with the rest of the world, to use the computers to do homework, acquire new lessons, or consult with teachers and other experts outside the campus and within the comfort of their home.

The use of these technologies makes learning more real, dynamic and more interesting. It also facilitates ease in students' comprehension and complements other available learning materials.

5. Value – Laden

Although the main focus of the curriculum is to teach students a set of body of knowledge, educators all over the world agree that values should also be integrated in the learning process. Inculcating values in an academic program can lead to the development of a human being committed to the building of a “just and humane society”. All academic programs should, therefore, be strengthened with values that are worthy of perpetuation for the rebuilding of society.

Because of widespread irregularities like graft and corruption, malpractice in some profession and design activities (such as tampering designs and contracts) and degradation of moral values among college graduates, it is imperative that the academe should do something on values formation among students. Teaching the students “values” gives them better preparation for the actual practice of their profession in the future.

Some universities have integrated values-formation in their academic program. For instance, faculty members at New Era University have emphasized the integration of the following values in their syllabus – responsibility, resourcefulness, creativeness, patience, cooperation/teamwork, neatness, sportsmanship, self-confidence, and humility.

6. Community-Involved

Participation in community service has become an essential educational tool that enriches students' learning experiences. It bridges the gap between the theories learned in the classroom and the realities of life in an actual community where theories can be practiced. Mc Elhaney (2008) stated that serving the community is not only an integral part of the mission of institutions of higher education but also very much an actual tool of learning as it has been observed that there are real academic learning outcomes in individuals who participated in community service.

Godwin (2001) also describes that community service is an experiential learning and has been offered as a significant strategy to assist higher education in producing the type of citizen needed for a healthy democracy.

Involving parents, teachers, and members of the community and others in the process of identifying academic goals and standards and measure of programs is seen as a powerful vehicle in improving academic achievement and influencing the direction and services of the school programs.

The Philippine government also acknowledges the value of community service as reflected in its Constitution. Article XIV of the Philippine Constitution states that:

“The state shall establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate and integrated system of the education relevant to the need of the people and society.”

On the other hand, because of its commitment to community, New Era University was also challenged to help uplift the lives of the people in its adopted communities, and thus initiated school- community collaboration. The collaboration involved the administration, faculty members, non-teaching personnel, students as well as residents of their adopted communities.

7. Industry-Linked

Students are oriented to the world of work before they graduate. Curriculums are now designed to enhance optimum individual adjustments toward self-realization and career development. This means integrating classroom study with planned and supervised practical experience in technological, educational or cultural activities outside of the formal classroom environment usually in public or private enterprises.

The basic philosophy of the academe-industry linkage is that personal growth and professional development are best achieved by an educational method that combines classroom learning with periodic intervals of planned and supervised practical experience away from the academic community (Profeta, 2013). It integrates theories learned in the classroom with relevant work in the world of work.

Gomez (2006) said that as the country moves towards the Information age, it becomes clearer that the education needs to respond to the nature and requirements of industry and business work force of today and tomorrow. The role of institution is to prepare individuals towards their functional and proactive roles in society. It also essential for education to become active in understanding and internalizing the skills needed for the industry.

■ Conclusion

Central to the realization of an institution's goal is continuity and innovation anchored on a relevant curriculum. Change in strategies, in the course contents, in methodologies for teaching, is well recognized as sensitive, difficult and sometimes, impossible, so much so that the acceptance of the status quo is pervasive.

There is a great belief that if a plan is well planned and based on logical theories and goals; there is nothing that will prevent it from being initiated. Yet, it will also be noted that a quite a number of elaborately planned innovations and curricular changes have floundered on the threshold of the bureaucratic organization.

SALAMAT PO !!!
(Thank You)