Tutorial letter 201/2/2018

THE EDUCATOR AS LEARNING PROGRAMME DEVELOPER

EDDHODJ

Semester 2

Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

This tutorial letter contains feedback on assignments 01 and 02.
Dear Student

This tutorial letter contains feedback on assignments 01 and 02.

Most of the assignments that I received from students were generally of a very high standard. It was clear to me that you went to a lot of troupe in completing the assignments. Thank you for that.

**FEEDBACK ON ASSIGNMENT 01**

Assignment 01 was marked by computer at assignment section and you received the correct answers with your marked assignment. If not, please contact the assignment section.

Students complained that they could not find the information to answer some of the questions. I refer you to the specific pages in the English prescribed textbook where you can find the answers to some of those questions:

- Question 16 (read p 109, 4.7 - cohesive relationship indicates a final phase, also read p 116, 4.7.9)
- Question 17 (p 38, 2.4)
- Question 21 (p 36 ... to bring together education and training, thus GET, FET and HET)
- Question 25 (general knowledge each child is unique)
- Question 26 (p 109, 4.7 – used to improve the next teaching and learning cycle)
- Question 27 (general knowledge – surely it is to apply class work)
- Question 29 (p 104, 4.6.6)
- Question 30 (actually it is logic, but read p 121, 4.9. Look at the manner in which the question was asked)
- Question 31 (also 4.9 – fist give the other learners an opportunity to answer!)
- Question 32 (It is clear from 4.4.1 on pp 89 - 90 that media is supplementary to the curriculum)
- Question 34 (p 110, 4.7.1 and p 128, 4.9.2.1 – it is clear that learners must know what is expected from them and why)
- Question 39 (this is a logic interpretation – surely it refers to academic abilities)

**FEEDBACK ON ASSIGNMENT 02**

I trust that you enjoyed completing this assignment. I realise that this assignment might have been a little difficult.

**Question 1**

Your task was to write an essay in response to the following question:

*As an interpreter of the curriculum and a developer of learning programmes, it is insufficient for the educator to give a narrow definition of the concept “curriculum”.*
Discuss this statement in an essay of three to four pages.

In your answer, describe the different ways of understanding “curriculum” and how these different understandings are related to each other in some ways.

Remember that “curriculum” (both as prescription and in practice) is not neutral but carries values and is a political issue. To illustrate your points, use examples from the prescribed book and from your own experience.

Guidelines:

- This was an ‘open’ question
- An impression mark was given according to own interpretation, different definitions and approaches, references to any policy documents and for discussions on plan and practice, like:

The concept “curriculum”: Plan and practice.

Different definitions of “curriculum”

Definitions become very difficult, especially when it comes to abstract concepts, because people often have different understandings of the same words. At a general level, an explanation of what “curriculum” is can be distinguished in terms of what is included and/or excluded in the description. The older, narrower definition states that when we want to study a curriculum, we must look at the curriculum plan, i.e. the document or the written intention of what, how and why something should be taught. This then actually defines “curriculum” as a “course of study” or “study programme”, whereas a broad definition is a more inclusive concept comprising all the opportunities for learning and viewed in a historical perspective in its socio-political context. Narrow definitions are likely to foster a conception of curriculum change as a limited and largely technical exercise. On the other hand, broader definitions of curriculum, which acknowledge both intended and unintended learning, and which view curriculum as a social construct, imply a stronger sense of the complexity of the curriculum and/or processes of change. This means that a particular society’s culture will produce a particular kind of curriculum, which in turn will also contribute to shaping that particular society and its culture. This mutual influence is on-going, and one should therefore not think of the curriculum and the social structure as entirely separate entities. If we would look at the South African situation, we can accept that the following social structures have had a powerful impact on the South African curriculum:

- The changing economic relations in the transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy
- The shifting power relations both within and between power groups with regard to the economic changes
- The shifts in ruling group ideology necessitated by and contributing to the changes

This debate about the interpretation of “curriculum” comes a long way. The following definitions might be useful:

1. **Official, explicit curriculum:** This is the prescribed curriculum, which is the official, formal curriculum and it is also described as the “blueprint” for teaching. It is also described as the curriculum or plan or the intentions of for instance the Department of Education. This means that a single plan can be used for different learners, although the contexts may differ vastly.

2. **Curriculum in practice:** This curriculum is the actual practiced or lived curriculum. In other words, it refers to how the curriculum is experienced by both the learners and the educators. It is also referred to as the non-official, implicit curriculum as implemented by an educator. It can therefore refer to that which is actually taught and learnt. Educator A’s lesson, for instance, demonstrates that that which is actually taught, can be very different from that which was planned. **Curriculum in practice** refers to the phenomenon where, apart from educator misunderstandings, resource constraints, etcetera interferes with the educator’s ability to implement a curriculum plan effectively.

3. **Covert curriculum** (as an aspect of the curriculum): The term “covert” is intended to convey the idea of teaching that is implicit (not spelt out), but deliberate on the part of the educator or the school. This is especially important in the early years of schooling where aspects such as “consideration for others”, “order and obedience”, teamwork and co-operation” are focal points. The “play” in the early schooling is a deliberate curriculum strategy to develop important attitudes and skills such as fine motor skills, spatial differentiation and various pre-numeracy skills.

4. **Hidden curriculum** (as an aspect of the curriculum): The term “hidden” refers to learning which is hidden from the educators as well as the learners. This is another form of implicit learning which the educators didn’t intend or are probably not even aware of. The kinds of environment that schools and classrooms present, indirectly allow us to learn many things about the world, or to have different perspectives of the world.

5. **Assessed curriculum.** This is the knowledge and skills that are measured to determine learner achievement or what objectives or learning outcomes have been attained. Assessment is an important element of a curriculum because it establishes how learners will be measured on performance.
Question 2

The meaning attached to the concept “curriculum” will influence the development of a curriculum in a specific context and time frame. Analyse how the approaches to curriculum development presented by Tyler, Stenhouse and Freire were used in the design of our interpretation and implementation of C2005, both its revisions and the amended NCS, referred to as the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in South Africa.

Assessment criteria

We will be looking for the following in your answer:

- Did you refer to the transformation of education and training?
- Have you defined the concept “curriculum”?
- Have you comprehensively distinguished between the three different approaches to curriculum planning?
- Have you related the three different approaches to curriculum development in SA?
- Did you refer to the universal principles in approaches to curriculum?
- Did you discuss the impact of these approaches in terms of curriculum interpretation?
- Is your essay clear and coherent, and does it include an introduction, a conclusion, paragraphs that contain one main idea and a logical flow of ideas from one paragraph to the next?
- Do you present a clear, well-justified argument?

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE!

South Africa embarked on a radical transformation of education and training between 1989 and 1994, and subsequently on reviews of the curriculum. One of the most challenging aspects of the initial transformation has been the adoption of an OBE approach that underpins the introduction of C2005. C2005 has tried to capture aspects of all three of the approaches discussed above, but just as there were tensions between the three different approaches of Tyler, Stenhouse and Freire, so there are tensions between different aspects of policy. Tyler used the narrow definition of curriculum, while Stenhouse argued for a broader definition and Freire just assumed a broader definition. But that was only their starting point. The main focus of their debate was on what should go into a curriculum and how it should be approached. For this reason, these different approaches become useful tools for sharpening our understanding and interpretation of C2005, both its revisions and the amended NCS, referred to as the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).
### Approaches to curriculum planning according to Tyler, Stenhouse and Freire: a summary

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ralph Tyler</th>
<th>Lawrence Stenhouse</th>
<th>Paolo Freire</th>
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| **Sees curriculum as a product (objectives/instrumental approach).**
Has a linear focus on the end product; cannot branch off in the middle. | **Sees curriculum as a process with objectives not set at the start, but changing in the teaching process.**
Focus on descriptiveness
Knowledge must be speculative. | **Thinks about the purpose of a curriculum – it must serve to liberate learners to make links and understand language, experiences and their daily struggle.** |
| **Objectives, content, methods and sequence questions.** | **Guidelines and professional development are important.**
Learners should know what to do with content.
Understanding and criteria are central to the process. | **Intellectual, social and political liberation – how learners feel about knowledge and whether experiences can be used in everyday life.** |
| **Educational purposes, experiences etc. are important.** | **Carry out research while teaching, evaluate while researching, and change the process of reaching goals.** | **The way in which we teach may change learners – it is always political (empowers or domesticates the learners).**
Negotiate understanding with learners. |
| **Do research to find the best content to include in curriculum/evaluate content.** | **Test, adapt and evaluate the process to see if it's enlightening.**
Learners should “change” in the learning process. | **Learners should be able to reflect on the value of learning.** |

The following **universal principles** in approaches to curriculum, but also to teaching and learning, are to be found in the views of Tyler, Stenhouse and Freire:

- experiential learning
- clarity of focus
- expanding opportunities
- defining outcomes, aims or objectives
- importance of knowledge, skills and values
- evidence of achievement
- individual learning
- what and whether we learn is more important than when we learned it
Tyler wanted structure in the teaching and learning situation and argued that there should be **clarity of focus** in what you want to teach, how you want to teach and how you want to assess. Therefore, the first step in effective teaching is to define **objectives** (outcomes), keeping in mind that these objectives should be context-bound. The teacher should ask four basic questions:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to achieve? (By “purpose” Tyler was referring to behavioural objectives (developed by gathering information from three sources: the subject matter, the learners and the society.)
2. What educational experiences can be provided that is likely to achieve these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organised?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being achieved?

Tyler argued that **individual learning** will ensure that each learner achieves the set objectives (outcomes). We can interpret this to mean that educational experiences should be derived from objectives, based on the results of an analysis of the situation (learner, subject, society), and that objectives should have been filtered through a philosophical/psychological screen before being finalised. It is important to develop citizens who are able to solve problems and can engage in democratic processes. The principles mentioned above have their roots in the competency-based education movement and mastery learning. They are based upon the premise that we can help learners to create definite and reliable evidence of achievement. This model focuses on the need to create favourable learning conditions as regards time, teaching strategies and learning success.

A more detailed look at competency-based learning reveals that Stenhouse's ideas of a teaching-learning process prepare learners for success in fulfilling various life roles. It is important to test, adapt and evaluate the process to see whether it is an enlightening one, and in that manner **expand opportunities** for application. Stenhouse stressed the importance of doing research while teaching and of following the route of “design down, deliver up” – a developmental process where the teacher can change the teaching-learning environment according to context and learners' needs. The learner should change in the teaching-learning process to internalise information and form opinions of his or her own.

Mastery learning promotes the idea that all learners can achieve the desired teaching outcomes if given favourable learning conditions such as flexibility, sufficient time and alternative ways of learning. Freire focused on these aspects; he wanted teachers and curriculum developers to make sure that educational experiences can be used in real life. **Experiential learning** was of utmost importance: learners should be able to reflect on the value of learning. What is also considered here is the perception of what the ideal learner in a particular field should **look like**, **be like**, **act like** and **think like**. Freire felt it was important to identify specific knowledge in order to attain a skill which could be applied in praxis as the connection between reflection and action.
The impact of these approaches in terms of curriculum interpretation

If we translate the approaches described above into teaching and learning principles, methodology, the use of learning materials and assessment, then teaching implies providing the learner with learning experiences and guiding, supporting and mediating the learning content by facilitating understanding.

Learning implies the development of not only the learner’s knowledge, but also his or her understanding of concepts, skills, activities and values. All these should then be based on interaction between teacher, learner, context and content. Learning is relevant to the real-life situations and experiences of the learner, therefore cross-curricular integration of knowledge and skills might prepare learners for reality and the world of work.

Teaching strategies in short imply that teaching involves critical thinking and reasoning, reflection and action. Learners must take responsibility for their learning by being actively involved in the teaching-learning process. This also means that the teacher should use a variety of approaches and learning material in the learning process to accommodate different learning styles.

Assessment is viewed as an integral part of teaching and learning, is continuous and based on a wide variety of techniques apart from testing. Feedback in assessment is valued as part of learning.

Question 3

MEMORANDUM (pages 91 – 92)

Reasons for using exemplary lesson materials may include
- offering an indication of what can be expected during lessons
- stimulating internal dialogue and reflection on questions such as: “How does the material relate to my personal opinions and my own teaching practice? Can the material be used for preparing and teaching lessons and if so, how? What reactions and learning outcomes from learners can be expected?”
- presenting specific guidelines for use in practice
- preventing early watering-down of the intended new approach to content and pedagogy and, at the same time, stimulating local adaptation and ownership of the new approach
- providing a basis for the exchange of experiences, feedback, discussion and reflection
- stimulating teachers to (re)design their own materials and / or to make a more selective, creative and conscious use of existing textbooks and materials

The teacher should keep the following in mind when choosing lesson materials that can lead to effective implementation of the curriculum:
- the material has a modular and flexible design and structure
- the material raises questions about essential yet vulnerable aspects of lesson preparation, subject-matter content, the role of the teacher and the nature of assessments and tests
the material displays a balance between providing concrete suggestions and procedural specifications on the one hand (including some justification for choices made), while avoiding exhaustive regulations on the other. This will stimulate active adaptation.

At the same time, concrete and specified guidelines are necessary – especially in the early stages of implementation – in order to actively support teachers in gaining experience, which will combat feelings of insecurity and avoid premature modifications in planning and instructional design.

An important lesson is that no matter how carefully they are designed and tested, using exemplary lesson materials alone has its limitations. Such materials have proven more effective if applied in combination with more comprehensive professional development schemes for teachers. These development schemes contain activities that will stimulate collaboration with and coaching by experts and colleagues, for example the exchange of experiences, collegial feedback and reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, focused on the user’s experiences with the material. In such “blended scenarios” virtual teacher networks may also play a role. Multimedia cases with visualisations of the envisaged teaching practice also have an added value.

When developing lesson material, teachers should acknowledge the iterative cycle of analysis, design, development, and evaluation in working with the curriculum. The following aspects of material design should be kept in mind:

- The first step is to determine the functions and features of the materials to be developed. This is done on the basis of a thorough analysis of literature, context and the needs of the target group.
- Testing the effectiveness of the lesson material might include observations of lesson preparation and implementation, as well as interviews, in order to gain insight into teachers’ and learners’ experiences.
- The teacher draws on the experience of subject / phase experts who have developed teaching material of high quality in terms of relevance, consistency, practicality and effectiveness. Doing this contributes to the professional development of teachers, and extends their knowledge of material design.

Teachers should assess the expected practicality and effectiveness of teaching materials; however, this can only be done when teachers and learners have used the new materials in the learning situation.

**ANY 10 RELEVANT FACTS**

(10)

TOTAL 50 X 2 = 100

Best wishes for your preparations for the examination!

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