Conceptualization and Definition of a Curriculum

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Abstract

Some years ago in my first semester of graduate studies, my mentor, Paul Ogula, introduced me to the idea that curriculum is "the world in drag," the way we dice up the experience of the world into tidy but arbitrary packages until it is again recoded as it enters the ceremonies, structures, and rituals of schooling. I puzzled over this idea for some time, working to reconcile my initial understanding of curriculum drawn from my years of classroom practice as a secondary school teacher. Even in defining curriculum at its most basic understanding one will find himself surrounded by a myriad of definitions. This paper offers a basis for scholars aiming at theoretical and experiential guidance for conceptualization of the word curriculum. Rooted in the literature of philosophy of education, some assumed meanings of curriculum and the theoretical and experiential views of several scholars, the author illustrates the foundational elements and dimensions of curriculum that ought not to miss in a valid definition of the word.

Key Words: Curriculum, Education, Curriculum Elements, Curriculum Definition.

Introduction

With the expansion of formal education in almost all societies around the world an appropriate and suitable definition of the term 'curriculum' has become increasingly essential and necessary. However, rather than achieving consensus and thereby enhancing a clear educational focus, literature reveals continued differentiation and disputation as to an acceptable definition of the term. Apparently, despite its recent common usage and development of study areas in the curriculum field, the term has a long history which dates as far back as the ages of education writers such as Plato, Aristotle, J. A. Comenious, Bobbit and Fredrich Froebel (Print, 1993).

Today however, there continue to be much interest in curriculum matters both locally and internationally and a range of very different theoretical discourses continue to be widely discussed in relation to international standards set by the global players through platforms such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), International Student Assessment (PISA), academic conferences and others. It is for this reason that some kind of a common understanding on the ingredients of an appropriate curriculum need to be reflected upon since the measure of educational achievements, which in essence is brought about by the implemented curriculum, are compared between and among countries and continents.

More often than before the term, curriculum, has also become quite frequently used in the media and the community in general. Such a development cannot be overlooked by curriculum scholars whose duty is to give guidance and direction on curriculum issues. As the study of curriculum has also grown in sophistication so it's very nature has become more challenging and sometimes problematic especially to novice and sometimes

even seasoned scholars of other disciplines that are learning about it for the first time in a systematic manner. It is for this reason that a concise definition such as the one done in this paper may be of help. However, like in all other academic discourses, it is not the intention of the author in this work to conclude and seal the debate on the matter. We instead leave that to the obsolescence of what we think we know, how we know it, how we know that we know and how the next generations will extend the knowledge frontiers of this discipline, curriculum.

Curriculum as a Programme of Education

Over the past decades, the study of curriculum has become an established component of almost all education programmes. Why has that been the case? It is obvious that education is the basic function that a curriculum saves in any education system and learning institutions. A curriculum embodies the intentions of education, it is the programme of education. A curriculum carries the beliefs, values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and all that education is about. One would wonder how especially formal education can take place without a curriculum. It is for this reason that curriculum scholars such as Print (1993) refer to the curriculum as the raison d'etre of education, the very substance of schooling. Starting this paper with such a conceptualization of a curriculum is actually quite deliberate because before this discourse get into the maze of the concept it is significant that the core of the concept, curriculum, is understood and appreciated in simple terms from the very beginning.

Assumed Meanings of a Curriculum

Most of those who have studied education but without a refined focus on understanding a curriculum take it for granted that through their studies they have also somehow understood what a

curriculum is. This is an academically dangerous position to find oneself in and can be and has been a source of confusion where curriculum issues are concerned. Because of such assumptions some individuals and educationists end up having assumed understandings of what a curriculum is. Some of those who have assumed the understanding of a curriculum have unfortunately even found themselves at the frontier of decision making about the study of a curriculum in institutions of higher learning and in Ministries of Education have been in the fore front of curriculum development. This is very common in most developing countries in Africa and their fruits have been evident in the poor quality of education that their graduates get and in the confusion that go with the development and implementation of curricular in primary and secondary schools as Bishop (1985) clearly explained that one of the challenges of curriculum development in Africa was the lack of specialists in the art and science of curriculum development itself. Carl (2012) actually pin points the source of this deficiency as emanating from institutions of higher learning where curriculum decisions are sometimes championed by curriculum novices and administrative staff who have very little ideas in the field of curriculum studies. Definitions are vital to understand because our definitions of concepts direct our actions regarding the practice of such concepts. Definitions aid understanding and understanding leads to effective application. This wisdom was long recognised by Bloom in his cognitive domain of learning objectives. In Blooms cognitive domain, understanding or comprehension comes before application and thus for one to apply a concept or idea they will need to first and foremost understand it. The point being made here in relation to assumed and claimed understandings of a curriculum is that having an authentic understanding of a concept such as a curriculum is important since as we have explained earlier a curriculum is the central business of every educational

institution. Reading through literature it is common to find the following definitions of a curriculum.

A curriculum is what is taught in school. In other words a curriculum is a set of subjects. To define a curriculum as 'what is taught in schools' is indeed, very vague. It is for this reason that some often talk about 'school curriculum' in this general way and they tend to mean by this the range of subjects taught and the amount of teaching time given to each in terms of hours or minutes. Such an approach to education seems to limit learning to the school and then limiting a curriculum to academic subjects. Marsh (2009) also pointed out that there is an assumption in this definition that what is studied is what is learned. A curriculum as explained in the preceding sections is much more than just subjects or what is confined to a school.

Another very common conceptualization of a curriculum is that of viewing it as content. Curriculum defined as content is another interesting emphasis and brings into question another term, namely the 'syllabus' and a 'course outline' as referred to especially in institutions of higher learning. A 'syllabus' is usually a summary statement of the content to be taught in a subject, course or unit. It is typically a list of content areas or topics of the subject matter. A syllabus or course outline is clearly a subsection of a curriculum and as such is subsumed within the broader concept. This emphasis on what content to be taught is a critical element of a syllabus but a curriculum includes more than this. Characterizing curriculum as subject matter is the most traditional image of a curriculum which depicts it as the combining of subject matter to form a body of content to be taught. Such content is the product of accumulated wisdom, particularly acquired through the traditional academic disciplines. Most teachers when asked to describe their school's curriculum they provide a litany of subjects or subject matter taught to students.

It is also common to find a curriculum being defined as a set of performance objectives or student learning being a very practical orientation of curriculum. This approach focuses upon specific competencies that should be attained by learners. Proponents of this approach argue that if a teacher knows the targets which learners should achieve, it is much easier to organize elements to achieve this end. The strength of this approach is that it focuses upon the learners who are after all the ultimate beneficiaries of the teaching and learning processes. Yet it must also be remembered that this approach can lead to an overemphasis upon behavioural outcomes and objectives reducing a curriculum to simply a listing of objectives to be achieved. This definition would usually lead to a narrow technical-functionalist approach to curriculum which would simply require large numbers of outcomes and high levels of specificity to be identified. Curriculum scholars such as Walker (1994) and Cairns (1992) were extremely critical of the uniformity and focus on such standards of the definition put forward. It is common knowledge as Kennedy (2005) concluded that a curriculum which only focuses on key competencies of the world of paid employment is deficient. A good curriculum should instead include a full range of skills and competencies that are relevant throughout the life span of every human person. A wide view of competencies which we may term as 'capacities' such as good communication skills, civic participation, living in harmony, respecting and caring for other people, taking care of one's health and well-being are some of the content areas that a curriculum should also include (Reid, 2007).

An analysis of definitions such as the three that have been presented in the previous sections may make one argue that some writers and curriculum thinkers advocate for their own preferred definition of curriculum, which may emphasize other connotations and meanings. It could be for this reason that Portelli (1987)

explained that other curriculum scholars may only be concerned about either delimiting what the term means or establish new meanings that they associate with it. However, curriculum scholars such as Hlebowitsh (1993), Oliva (1997), Toombs and Tierney (1993) have all criticized commentators in the field of curriculum who focus only on certain facets of the curriculum while ignoring others. Partisan and biased definitions that only capture a few of the various characteristics and dimensions of curriculum should not be entertained since they also have a higher degree of misleading the way education is viewed and conducted. Over the years different philosophies of education have existed and these have had a huge impact on the way curriculum was and is viewed. In the following sections we have tried to draw attention to some of these philosophies in relation to curriculum and education.

Philosophy and the Curriculum

Nowhere is the dependence of education on philosophy more marked than in the question of the curriculum. In the first chapter of his work on Education, Oliva (1979) asserted that in the determination of the curriculum, the first step must obviously be to classify the philosophical thinking behind a proposed curriculum since such a background will help to determine leading kinds of activities which constitute human education. To this principle there can be no objection. Each curriculum that is in existence has a philosophical underpinning which determines the way such a curriculum is organised and implemented. It is for this reason that in a paper such as this one it is inevitable that a discussion on the influence of Philosophy on how a curriculum is defined must be done.

The philosophy of education has over the years guided the development of curriculum in a very significant way. The reason is

obvious since the way a curriculum is defined from the educational philosophical point of view determines its construction. The discussion of general philosophy is, however, beyond the scope of this paper but all that we are doing is to simply relate the definition of a curriculum to some of the educational philosophical thinking as a way of showing the existing relationship and thus widen the comprehension of a curriculum.

Philosophy of education facilitates the understanding of the world through school activities and the body of knowledge. Schubert (1986) acknowledged that philosophical assumptions are always present in any curriculum, whether they are consciously reflected on or not. Ornstein and Behar (1995) further stated that philosophical issues have always impacted on educational curriculum designing and society. Additionally, the duo, Ornstein and Behar (1995), observed that there is urgency that dictates continuous appraisal and reappraisal of the role of educational institutions and that calls for a philosophy of education. Without philosophy, curriculum developers would be without direction as a basic foundation of organising and implementing what they would be trying to achieve. Furthermore Ornstein and Behar (1995) pointed out that almost all elements of curriculum are based on a philosophy. Thus philosophy is in a way one of the criteria for determining the aims of a curriculum. Aims or purposes are statements of value that are based on philosophical beliefs. The means represent the processes and methods which reflect philosophical choices. The ends connote the facts, concepts and principles of the knowledge or behaviour learned, that is, what is considered to be important to learning. Hence philosophy is essential in formulating and justifying an educational basis of procedures and activities (Ornstein & Behar, 1995). Four major philosophies have received the attention of educators over the

years. Although these philosophies are known by various names, the four are referred to as Social reconstructionism, Progressivism, Essentialism and Perennialism.

Social Reconstructionism

The social reconstructionist philosophy is based on the early socialistic and utopian ideas of the nineteenth century. It was economic pressure that gave birth to this philosophy (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998). At the beginning of social reconstructionism, the progressive educational movement was still popular, but a few significant progressive educators became disillusioned and impatient with the American education reform. These educators argued that progressivism put too much emphasis on learner centered education which mainly served the individual learner in middle class and private schools. What was needed was more emphasis on society-centered education that took into consideration the needs of society and all classes of people, not only the middle class. McNeil (1996) contended that social reconstructionism is interested in the relationship between the curriculum and the social, political and economic development of society. Thus a curriculum in this context is defined in terms of how it will help learners acquire skills, values, knowledge and attitudes that will help them solve social, political and economic challenges of society. Social reconstructionists are convinced that a curriculum should bring improvements in society (Oliva, 1997). In essence, social reconstructionism holds the view that educational institutions should not simply transmit the cultural heritage or simply study social problems but should become agencies of solving social, political and economic problems (Oliva, 1997).

Progressivism

Progressivism emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (McNeil, 1996; Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998). The progressive movement in education was also part of the largest social and political movement of reform in America. The educational roots of progressivism can be traced back to the work of John Dewey in the early twentieth century. In his most comprehensive work, Democracy and Education, Dewey claimed that democracy and education go hand in hand. Dewey viewed an educational institution, such as a school, as a miniature democratic society in which learners could learn and practise the skills and tools necessary for democratic living (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998). According to progressivist thought, the skills and tools for learning include problem-solving methods and scientific enquiry. Progressivism placed more emphasis on how to think, not on what to think. The progressive movement consisted of many components. Among the most influential were the learner-centered and the activity-centered curriculum. As Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) pointed out, the emphasis on subject matter was replaced by emphasis on the learner, meaning that the needs and interests of the learner dominated the curriculum designing process. A definition of a curriculum from this point of view will definitely have to place the needs of the learner first before any other. A curriculum slogan such as learning by doing is what the progressivists promote in curriculum construction. Thus, this educational philosophy would promote a curriculum where learners would test ideas by active experimentation.

Essentialism

As stated by Ornstein and Hunkins (1998), this is another form of the traditional and conservative philosophy. Rooted in both idealism and realism, essentialism emphasises an academic

subject-matter curriculum and encourages educators to stress order, discipline and effort (Ornstein & Levine, 1993). It is important to note that during the period of essentialism, progressivism emerged for a short period of time as the most popular educational philosophy. Due to essentialist criticism, progressivism experienced a somewhat rocky path. In 1957 essentialism reclaimed its predominant position (Oliva, 1997). The purpose of an essentialist curriculum is the transmission of the cultural heritage. Unlike the social reconstructionists, who want to change society, the essentialists want to preserve it (Oliva, 1997). According to Ornstein and Behar (1995), an essentialist curriculum seeks to promote the intellectual growth of the learner and thus this school of thought promote essential subjects; namely English, Mathematics, Science, History and foreign languages at the secondary level. Carl (2012) acknowledged that, according to essentialists, knowledge is based on what is termed as essential skills, academic subjects, and masterly of concepts and principles in the subject matter. He further explained that academic subjects form the core of the essentialist curriculum. Organised courses are the vehicles for transmitting the culture and promoting mental discipline. In a sense, the essentialist tailors the learner to the curriculum, whereas the progressivist tailors the curriculum to suit the learners' needs and interests (Oliva, 1997). Tough, hard academic rigour and training and a good deal of homework dominate the curriculum of essentialists. The student must be made to work hard at his or her own studies with no fun in the work (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). In essentialism, the teacher is considered a master of a particular subject or discipline. Therefore, a curriculum is defined in terms of its focus on teaching the essential elements of academic and moral knowledge which constitute a strong core curriculum and high academic standards.

Perennialism.

Perennialism is regarded as the oldest and the most conservative education philosophy rooted in realism. The purposes of education according to perennialism are the disciplining of the mind, the development of the ability to reason, the pursuit of the truth and the cultivation of the intellect (Oliva, 1997; Ornstein & Behar, 1995). Unlike progressivists who believe that truth is relative and changing, the perennialists believe that truth is eternal, everlasting and unchanging. Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) contended that perennialism relies on the past, universal knowledge and cherished values of society. Perennialists describe the universe, human nature, truth, knowledge, virtue and beauty as unchanging. To them, the aim of education is the same in every age and in every society. The perennialist curriculum is subject centered. It draws heavily on defined disciplines or logically organised bodies of content, what proponents call 'liberal' education with emphasis on language, literature, mathematics, grammar, rhetoric and great books of the Western World (Oliva, 1997; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). Like essentialism, the perennialists view the teacher as the authority in the field whose knowledge and expertise are unquestionable. Teaching is primarily based on the Socratic method 'oral exposition' lecture and explication. Learners' interests are irrelevant for curriculum designing because learners are immature and not experienced and lack the judgement to determine what are the best knowledge and values to learn (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998; Ornstein & Behar, 1995). The perennialist look backwards for the answers to social problems. In defining a curriculum from the perennilist world view, a curriculum is seen in the light of ideas that have lasted over centuries since such ideas are as relevant and meaningful today as when they were written.

As we conclude on this section it is vital to retaliate that since philosophy helps to explain and give meaning to people's

decisions and actions, in the absence of educational philosophy, the curriculum developer is vulnerable to externally imposed prescriptions, fads and frills, authorization schemes and other 'isms'. Very few education systems adopt a single curriculum philosophy but most of them combine various philosophies (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). Mulenga (2015) also cautioned that too much emphasis on any one philosophy at the expense of the others might do harm and cause conflict in a curriculum. The educational philosophies discussed implicitly or explicitly represent a particular perspectives on curriculum and its proponents which in turn determine a particular approach to curriculum designing. Thus, usually what we see in practice is that a national school curriculum for example would reflect several philosophies which add to the dynamics of the curriculum in the school. Depending on their philosophical orientation, curriculum scholars will have varied conceptualisations of curriculum.

Definitions of Curriculum through the lens of Scholars
Educators have over the years defined curriculum in different ways because they bring to the task different perceptions of what curriculum should be. Perhaps the most common definition derives from the word's Latin root, 'currere'- which is the Latin infinitive of curriculum, which means 'racecourse'. By coming up with such a definition Pinar (1974) wanted to highlight the running or the curriculum lived experience of the learner. The aspect of learning experiences being emphasised are also seen in Taba's (1962) definition and curriculum development model. In her understanding, Taba focused on the planned experiences aspect of the curriculum to the extent that planning and organization of curriculum elements preoccupied her thinking about curriculum development. However, as we have explained in the dimensions of curriculum that the curriculum includes not only the planned, but

also the unplanned experiences as well. That being the case then it means that Taba's definition had some room for improvement. Are we then agreeing with Zais (1976) who argued that a search for the correct definition of curriculum is not a very productive enterprise? Not at all. It is just that the definitions that exist have a history and context. How then do we benefit from all the thousands of definitions that scholars have come up with?

Glatthorn et. al (2012) noted that definitions in curriculum are varied because there are either descriptive, prescriptive or both. Prescriptive definitions provide us with what "ought" to happen, and they more often than not take the form of a plan, an intended programme, or some kind of expert opinion about what needs to take place in the course of study, while the descriptive definitions go beyond the prescriptive terms as they force thought about curriculum nor merely in terms of how things ought to be in real classrooms or any other educational situations (Ellis, 2011). Some authors' definitions of either slant are presented in the following paragraphs. Some of the prescriptive definitions as reflected by Ellis (2011) are:

Dewey (1902) explained that a curriculum is a continuous process of educational reconstruction that should help the child move from his present experience into what is represented by the organized bodies of truth that we call studies which present new experiences to the learner.

Tyler (1949) stated that curriculum is all the learning experiences planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals.

Print (1993) defined a curriculum as all the planned learning opportunities offered to learners by the educational

institution and the experiences learners encounter when the curriculum is implemented.

> The Indiana Department of Education (2010) explained that curriculum means the planned interaction of pupils with instructional content, materials, resources, and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives.

These are just some of the prescriptive definitions of curriculum that exist in literature. But it is also true as mentioned earlier that other definitions are quite descriptive such as the following from Ellis (2011) as well;

> Ragan (1960) defined a curriculum as all the experiences of the child for which the school accepts responsibility.

> Brown (2006) stated that a curriculum is all the student school experiences relating to the improvement of skills and strategies in thinking critically and creatively, solving problems, working collaboratively with others, communicating well, writing more effectively, reading more analytically, and conducting research to solve problems.

> Silva (2009) viewed a curriculum as an emphasis on what students can do with knowledge, rather than what units of knowledge they have, is the essence of 21st century skills.

With all these varied definitions of curriculum from renowned curriculum scholars, there seem to be underlying elements that are commonly agreed as constituent of a good definition of a curriculum. Ughamadu (2006) listed these elements as (1) goals

and objectives (the curriculum intent), (2) content or subject and subject matter, (3) learning experiences, and (4) evaluation. These four are referred to in the studies of curriculum as curriculum components, elements or simply pillars of the curriculum. These are what holds the discipline together and any curriculum specialist worth the name will have to understand them pretty well. Thus, Tanner and Tanner (1980:25) provided an accommodating definition of curriculum as:

> Curriculum is the planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning outcomes, formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience, under the auspices of the school, for the learner's continuous and willful growth in personal-social competence.

An analysis of this definition in the light of the challenges of defining a curriculum will be helpful at this point.

Tanner and Tanner's Definition: An Analysis

In the definition of Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner, we notice a composite of both the prescriptive and the descriptive understanding of curriculum. In this definition a curriculum is presented as dynamic and a systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experiences. In this definition, it is first that a curriculum involves planning. Almost all Ministries of Education, and in some countries states, regions or schools and other institutions of learning have personnel with the right competence to develop a curriculum which usually should accommodate the needs and aspiration not just of the society but also of the learners themselves. The definition of Tanner accommodates another important aspect of curriculum; "learning experiences". By learning experiences, the definition attempts to resolve the "end"

of what curriculum is meant to achieve. There is the means- the plan and then, the end- the learning experience. This is what is also known as; intended learning outcome. Additionally, Tanner and Tanner's definition specify the role of the school or learning institution; that of the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience. This role is distinct from the functions of other agencies in the society. Every learning institution is laden with the responsibility of reconstructing the experience and perceptions of the learner. The curriculum therefore becomes a lens, if properly followed, in which the learner would see the past, present and future of the world.

The intended learning experience means the same thing as objective. Every curriculum to be complete even by definition should have an intention. This serves as a means to communicate with greater precision the educational intentions to be achieved. For efficiency, there is need for classifying educational objectives. This is technically called taxonomy. Lunenberg (2011) defined taxonomy as a scheme for classifying educational objectives into categories descriptive of the kinds and level of learning that educators seek from learners. More commonly, taxonomy is divided into three domains of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Thus, Tanner and Tanner's definition took to cognizance this understanding and hence, it is regarded as broad-based and encompassing.

Curriculum Dimensions

We started this reflection by bringing together the two inseparable concepts, education and curriculum. These concepts also share the same dimensions. Curriculum and education dimensions are different facets of the same reality which help educators have a holistic understanding of teaching and learning. The formal, non-formal and informal curriculum dimensions help to clarify the

definitions that should best reflect what a curriculum is about. They act as further parameters of curriculum understanding.

The formal dimension refers to the learning experiences and activities that learners undertake formally in a school. The formal dimension of a curriculum is clearly prescribed by the curriculum specialist in documents such as the syllabus, course outlines or module as the case might be. In most learning institutions one can actually see it on the master time table of the institution. Everything about it is formal. The venues for different lessons or lectures are designated, the facilitator is known, time is clearly allocated and learners and teachers strictly follow it. As mentioned earlier on, one cannot reduce a curriculum to this dimension only by claiming that a syllabus or course outline is a curriculum.

The non-formal dimension also consists of planned learning activities that are undertaken in a school set up. The non-formal dimensions of a curriculum is also selected and organized but it does not have many formalities as the formal dimension in terms of time, venue and facilitator. It is not necessarily done in the classroom, lecture room or laboratory. These activities include clubs, games, sports, drama and many others. They were previously referred to as extra-curricular activities implying that they were outside the regular learning activities but now they are known as co-curricular activities meaning that they go side by side with the other aspects of the curriculum. There are as significant and as important to the learners' education as the formal dimension.

The informal dimension is also referred to as the unintended or emerging curriculum. In learning institutions, the teachers and parents may know or not know about it. This dimension of the curriculum is not necessarily on the timetable but it influences the learner in a very strong way. The informal curriculum is very difficult to control because learners pick it from the 'junk yard'. It

may include such aspects as learner's appearance during lessons, observing time for different activities in the learning institution, role modelling, etc. The informal dimension is sometimes planned and guided by the school when it includes activities such as observation of school rules and behaviour of teachers as role models. For instance, Mulenga and Luangala (2015:47) stated that "student teachers form their identities by modelling behaviours of those who teach them and thus universities needs to examine the placement of staff". Thus we can notice from this that this dimension is actually very influential even in higher institutions of learning. The task of the head teacher, the teacher or whoever is in charge of an educational institution is to remove the negative effects of this dimension by planning it so as to reinforce the formal curriculum. In cases where this dimension is neglected the school is unlikely to achieve its core business. In their study Mulenga and Mukaba (2018:63) actually noted that "it had been realized that schools could not focus on cognitive development only (formal dimension) but also on psychosocial support if education for all are to be achieved hence the need for guidance and counseling in school". Guidance and counseling are activities to support learners in the informal dimension in order to enhance the formal dimension.

Why should we spend another time on these aspects of the curriculum? It is because over the years the confusion which had come with the definition of curriculum arise from the lack of understanding of these significant facets of a curriculum. Therefore if one embarked on the curriculum definition journey it is inevitable that the three dimensions are part of such a definition since they make what a curriculum is comprehensively about.

Conclusion

While there would continually be many more conceptualisations and definitions of curriculum by education scholars, curriculum thinkers and theorists, only definitions that accommodate the essential elements of education and curriculum could pass as valid definitions. As a way of capping this discourse therefore, a submission is being made as a concluding definition of a curriculum as:

> Curriculum is all the selected, organized, integrative, innovative and evaluative educational experiences provided to learners consciously or unconsciously under the school authority in order to achieve the designated learning outcomes which are achieved as a result of growth, maturation and learning meant to be best utilized for life in a changing society.

If education is brought about as a result of what is implemented from the curriculum and if education is dependent on what the dynamic society needs, then having a curriculum that will stand a test of time is just wishful thinking. By fulfilling the needs of a dynamic society the conceptualization of a curriculum will continue to slowly accommodate itself with the present educational needs so as to suit the arising need. In their famous article 'Bringing Out the Dead: Curriculum History and Memory' Hendry and Winfield (2013) cautions curriculum scholars that the challenge is to work towards a rethinking of some of the very notions we have come to rely upon intellectually as curriculum meanings – those well-worn grooves which provide such a seamless glide that we hardly know they are there: assumptions and boundaries around our thinking which are themselves the stuff of ideologically generated infrastructure.

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