NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS: A MULTILEVEL CONCEPTION FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP-ORIENTED ECONOMICS CURRICULUM FOR COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The process of curriculum design/development will surely impact on the learning and learners. The primary objective of a curriculum is to meet the target learners for their needs and necessities. In line with this, needs analysis has become a major process that determines the actual needs of learners or groups of learners. It plays a crucial role and become a mandatory phase in the process of syllabus/curriculum design. The paper endeavors to explore the needs assessment in the curriculum development process: a multilevel conception for entrepreneurship-oriented economics curriculum for colleges of education in Nigeria. It further discusses the Basic premises of the proposed curriculum development model, it's major concepts/features, the place of need analysis in the curriculum development process was stressed. The proposed model
was highlighted, the conclusion drawn and recommendations suggested which include; curriculum planners need to spend sufficient time in needs analysis to make students realise their needs and want.

**Keywords:** Needs analysis, curriculum design, economics, multilevel conception, Entrepreneurship-oriented

### Introduction

In recent years, the promotion of entrepreneurship as a revolution to solving numerous economic and social challenges facing developing countries has attracted significant attention by policymakers and academia. This is because the impact of globalisation on the education system is overwhelming as it has greatly affected not only the curriculum but also the instructional process including the entire system. Entrepreneurship education has been embraced by almost all the developed countries and its capabilities and efficacy in springing up economics are not in doubt. It is believed that refocusing the education system will immensely contribute to building entrepreneurial mindset. However, a process of creating this self-awareness and the development of individual capacity for creative and innovative thinking decision making and action/policy implementation should be an integral constituent of what people learn in schools, Colleges, and Universities.

Training programmes in Nigeria both at the secondary and tertiary levels have concentrated more on teaching knowledge and skills in principle devoid of practical experience in related fields. There have been extensive calls for entrepreneurial education in Nigeria (Ozoro, 1973; Chimuwaze & Obanya 1989, Parking, 1994). In 1993, the Federal Government of Nigeria urged training institutions, in the country to gear their programmes towards relevance for the production of graduates that possess relevant skills for self-employment and self-reliance.

Our world is fast-changing and becoming independent amongst the most interesting in human history (Onu, 2010). It is indeed an era of greater challenges than ever. These challenges bring possibilities for those responsible for educating subsequent generation. On the strength of this, Greig, Pike & Selby (1991) asked the following question. How should schools go about in the task of preparing young people for more informed and effective participation in the world society? How can teachers best help develop global understanding in the face of this existing yet daunting prospect of adult life in the 21st century? What kind of skills, capacities, and insight do students need to make sense of, cope with, and handle an accelerating rate of change prospect of adult life in the 21st century. A synthesis of the above questions constitutes a rich content and scope of entrepreneurship education.
Curriculum specialists have not dealt extensively and explicitly with the issue of needs assessment. This is in contrast to the field "educational planning" and "instructional design" where many different conceptions of this process have created a voluminous literature on the subject. The assessment of needs is a critical and complex issue, which comprises the most significant component of the curriculum development process. Teachers should play a pivotal role in this process if effective learning is ever going to take place.

**Basic Premises of the Proposed Curriculum Model**

The model presented is rooted in five basic assumptions as follows:

a) Curriculum and instruction (Instructional Design) are not separate or independent academic fields functioning in isolation from one another (Klein, 1991; Goodlad, 1979; Mehmohammadi, 1998). Instead, they lie on one continuum and occupy different places on it. In other words, curriculum considering its different meanings; as "a system" or a field of study" (Beauchamp, 1981) is regarded to be a realm so inclusive that incorporates instruction as an integral part. Curriculum discourse, it is believed, can legitimately address issues that are frequently relegated to the field of instruction.

b) All three "fundamental factors of education" (Dewey, 1902) or "sources of decision-making" (Klein, 1980) must be incorporated in a needs-based curriculum model to assure the desirability of the outcome. In other words, the long-held view of the contradictory nature of these source of information can be fundamentally, and not superficially as in Tyler rational (Klibard, 1986), reconciled such integration or reconciliation paves the way for distancing the curriculum from its traditional conceptions (i.e. technical, means-ends, or "measured curriculum") (Klien, 1986).

c) A centralized curriculum development system is a more realistic option at least for developing countries. In many developing countries too, this indeed is the functioning mode and many developed countries are moving, though with different paces towards developing centralized "national or state-mandated curriculum" (Schubert, 1989). The proposed model operates within the boundaries of such a curriculum development system.

d) The model from another perspective, transforms the centralized interest of policymakers into a reasonable state by stimulating the distribution of decision making power while keeping the central office as a key player. It might, therefore, alternatively be regarded as a scheme aimed at curbing radical centralization tendencies.

e) Reasonably, purposeful and localized efforts at decentralizing the curriculum development process effectively increase the chances for obtaining the intended
consequences of the program by capitalizing on factors proven to be involved in the implementation process, such as the "sense of ownership".

The Place of Needs Assessment in Curriculum Development

Needs analysis according to many curriculum experts, is the first objective derived from the philosophy and the need of the society (Tyler, 1994, Onwuka, 1985). Need analysis is the basis of training programs and aid development programs. The main purpose of conducting a need analysis is to produce information which when acted upon makes courses better adapted to student's needs and that part of the objective of formal needs identification is to back up one's proposed with quantitative evidence of their importance. Bishop, (1985) added that concrete evidence of particular needs (in many cases), such as the surveys produced, could be directly used as part of the course validation/approval procedure.

Uwaka, (1982) perceived satisfying a given needs as setting up conditions in which higher needs are formed. Hence human beings continuously want to fulfill and satisfy their numerous needs as they arise. However, Mackey, (1978) perceived needs analysis as a means of producing and teaching effective language course. Thus he emphasized the importance of needs analysis in language teaching. He further affirmed that once the teacher can identify the learner's needs, he/she is a step nearer to being able to translate these needs (identity and teach an effective course. Mackay, also, identified two formal ways of identifying the learner's needs. These are the use of questionnaires and a structured interview.

Kaufman (1982) defined a 'need' as a discrepancy or gap between the way things are and the way things ought to be. The 'ought to' should be established by public consensus, expressed in terms of what school children should learn and how well. Thus the gap between consensus and present achievement of the students is a 'need'. He further maintained that needs analysis is better for a job analysis especially in an industry rather than for the present performance of personnel compared to the performance desired of them. However, Wilkins, (1976) proclaimed needs analysis as a kind of synthesizing operation that enhances a successful course implementation. Thus, he insisted on the language terms to specify the content, purpose, role-set medium, mode, and channel of language teaching.

Richterich and Chancerel (1980) perceived needs analysis as useful and crucial to formative evaluation. According to them, needs analysis is useful towards decision making about the aims, objectives, content, and method of learning programmes.

Major Concepts (features) of the Model

1. Multiple levels of Needs Assessment:

   In line with the illuminating concept of "level of curriculum decision making" (Goodlad, 1979 and Klein, 1991), it is proposed that needs assessment be undertaken at different levels and stages, each being distinguishable by certain unique characteristics.
2. **Different levels or stages of needs assessment requires emphasis to be placed on different sources:**

"Macro-level" decision-making calls for an assessment where society as relevant information sources for purposes of identifying "educational needs" (Unruh and Unruh, 1984), while relatively less attention can be paid to students for purposes of extracting "psychological needs". On the contrary, "micro-level" needs assessment represents an activity that requires stronger emphasis put on students as a data source aiming at the identification of "psychological needs" while a less strong emphasis on the other two sources namely subject matter and society is required.

3. **Needs-based curriculum development is a highly dynamic process**

This is in contrast to the static image usually portrayed for this process within a centralized context. It is a principle contention of this model that dominant views on curriculum development focusing exclusively on the planning stage are consonant with the traditional means-ends conception of the curriculum. A more defensible need assessment, it is argued, entails continued participation in curriculum decision making as a primary concern of curriculum practitioners at all stages or contexts of the "curriculum engineering" process (Beauchamp, 1981). Also, the levels or stages are interactive and as depicted in figure 1, mutually inform and reinforce one another.

In other words, the needs assessment is not done once in for all. It is rather, a continuous process, and curriculum deliberation should never be considered final. Otherwise, decisions and actions that follow the perceived terminal stage will be conducted in a non-deliberative spirit which is thoroughly incommensurate with the requirements of any educative process.

![Figure 1: The conceptual](image)

4. **The necessity of an appeal to different types of data**

The proposed curriculum development model incorporates and encourages the utilization of different types of data namely; quantitative and qualitative or interpretive data (Eisner, 1994). Each type of data is best suited to the process of acquiring needs
information or decision or decision making at a specific level, mindful of data expected from each data.

The Proposed Curriculum Development Model

Based on the points presented thus far, the following conceptual models are proposed as a multilevel approach to the Economics curriculum development process in Colleges of Education.

The phase of "curriculum planning", "curriculum implementation" (rooted in Beauchamp's concept of curriculum engineering) are dealt with its own right. Evaluating, the final phase of curriculum engineering however, is seen as an encompassing element, i.e no activity in this domain can or should be carried out devoid of an evaluative character of some sort. Therefore, including evaluation in the needs assessment process in the same way as planning and implementation are included is not deemed plausible.

Evaluation, in other words, need not be treated independently as an isolated phase in this model, since decision inevitably take place within a broad evaluation context, either formal or informal decision. In other words, can or should be understood as a by-product of a conscious or unconscious act of evaluation.

The conceptual model is depicted in figure 1 and the major characteristics of each level of needs-based curriculum development are summarized in the following table. A detailed discussion of each level of curriculum development, based on ten characteristics dimensions are: geographical coverage, subject matter specificity, final decision product, orientation time, dominance by source, dominance by type of data, key players, final product stability, and final product specificity.

The model's claim is rather modest. It is thought to represent a rough estimate of what should take place in terms of division of labour in the curriculum deliberation process.

Stage 1
The first level of macro-scale curriculum development.

Decision made at this stage leads to the determination of educational ideologies or what some curriculum experts refer to as manifesto (Eisner, 1994). This serves as the foundation for curriculum decision making and includes general subject-free, value choices, which embrace a particular notion of educational needs. Eisner identified six such ideologies and refers to them as:

Rational humanism, critical theory, progressivism, cognitive pluralism, conceptualism, and religious orthodoxy.

Ideologies or orientations (Miller, 1983) are necessarily statements oriented towards the future, not meant to inform an immediate teaching-learning decision or the here-and-now. Thus the major source of data is society or culture at large and the most pertinent type of data is normative, not empirical, making the statement robust and less
susceptible to change. Key players are system-wide policymakers/politicians who traditionally try to influence this document of natural significance by resorting to whatever means accessible to them (Kliebard, 1986, Mahmond, 2016). Teacher's professional bodies, however, depending on social and political strength can play a significant role at this stage of curriculum development.

Stage 2
This represents the second and last stage of macro-scale curriculum development.

Decisions made at this level lead to the determination of guide/framework, which is necessarily subject (topic) specific. Thus the model proposes that this document mark the end of the curriculum planning process and that curriculum developer should not carry it further to culminate in a more detailed specification of a curricular element. Decision-makers who are usually (academics) especially subject specialists, curriculum specialists, and practicing teachers. Serious attention is given to students and their needs, genuine and comprehensive attention to students and their needs, interest background, etc, however, is not deemed possible at this stage.

Data used as the basis for deliberation at this stage is mainly of quantitative type drawn from scientific theory and research in areas such as social needs and deficiencies, developmental tasks of the age group in the country's strategic development plans, and learning theories. Thus the product of the curriculum development at this stage is expected to be less stable and also less diffuse than the product of the previous stage.

Stage 3
This represents the first level of micro-scale curriculum development.

This marks the beginning of the implementation of the curriculum, leaving behind a framework representing the final product of the previous level. The changes in based on the perceived needs and requirements of the particular region/province of the nation. Decisions made at this stage deemed suitable for social, economic, historical, political, and educational parameters peculiar to the region and consistent with its future development direction as stipulated in the official documents.

The decision in this level is made for here-and-now, intended to approximate an operationalized curriculum for a relatively specific context of use state-level curriculum specialist and practicing teachers should optimally play a major role in making decisions i.e adaptation of curriculum framework and/or adaptation of curriculum materials.

Stage 4
At this stage, the curriculum takes its final shape and embraces the decision made to adapt the curriculum framework or the stage adopted textbooks to the needs, interests, and background of a particular group of students at a specific site. Decisions are highly specific and are taken to align the curriculum with knowledge, skills, capabilities, and possible learning difficulties of a particular group in a particular subject area.
According to Short (1982), or what constitutes narrow scale school-based curriculum development (Lewy, 1991), represents a critical stage in this process in which teachers play a pivotal role. Teachers' sensitivity, reflectiveness (Schon, 1987), competencies, and professional knowledge and skills spell out how effectively this substantial task is carried out. The appropriateness of this set of decisions in-turns determines the effectiveness of learning or the quality of learning students experience.

Conclusion

Needs analysis has a vital role in the process of designing and carrying out any course, and as is considered as a crucial component of systematic curriculum development. The complexity of this process necessarily translates into a complex conceptualization. However, by trying to integrate the inconsistent knowledge available through curriculum literature, the achievement of such end must rigorously pursue. The paper proposes a model, which regards curriculum development as a multilevel needs-assessment activity. Two phases of planning and curriculum implementation should be considered as a critical stage where curriculum formation takes place. Decision made at the macro level is farther apart from the classroom and represent generic decisions. While decisions made at the micro-level are those that are more attentive to the special needs and concern of a better-known group of learners.

The model, therefore, requires serious attention to be paid to teacher training and in-service programme to further consolidate the professional knowledge base and skills of the teaching force. Creating a support infrastructure is also necessary to encourage and facilitate teachers involved in the sphere of curriculum decision-making.

Recommendations
Based on the study, the following recommendations were suggested;

i. Teachers should rely more on qualitative data, i.e. extraction from the learning environment.

ii. Researching about students and their job will help in planning a better need analysis and using the same information during course design.

iii. Sharing the result of the needs analysis with students is an opportunity to correct their thoughts and knowing the others' ideas.

iv. Curriculum planners need to spend sufficient time on need analysis to make the students realize their needs and want.

v. Giving prior instructions to the students on need analysis and the questions can make them think about their needs and wants.

References


