

Importance of the curriculum to the society by phunziro mphwina

[Education](#), [Curriculum](#)



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Purpose of the Curriculum to the Society

Introduction

In 1995 Hornby described education as a process of training and instruction of children and young people in educational institutions which is designed to give knowledge and develop skills useful to the society. This process is centred by a number of planned activities which hold the potentials of imparting the skills significant to the society just as the definition points out.

An outline or structure of these activities is what makes up an educational curriculum. Pillai (1984; p5) defines the curriculum as a comprehensive plan for an educational training programme or course to offer new or improved manpower to fulfil the rising needs of a dynamic society . Below is a discussion of some of the purposes of the curriculum to the society. The curriculum serves the function of a tool for societal development.

The curriculum include important and knowledge to be imparted on the learners, this is to say that there is a supplement of ideas on the students despite their innate intelligence. These new ideas help in discoveries that may assist in the society's growth for example, new ways of increasing

agricultural productivity. A student at school may encounter an idea that may help in the increase of agricultural outputs and if he implements this new idea, the society to which he belongs, would develop economically.

A point which Jacobs (1997, p23) agrees with by saying that “ education is the realization of each person’s unique potentialities thus, education focuses on the social conditions that block the fullest realisation of individual potentialities as it emphasizes on the changes in the present system required to bring about a more humanistic society”. This is just to say that education allows learners to make important contributions to the societies to which they belong, on the other hand enhancing the development of their particular societies. The curriculum also works as a source of societal cohesion. Webster (2011, p365) described a society as an enduring and cooperating social group whose members have developed organized patterns of relationships through interaction with one another. This togetherness is partially achieved through the curriculum in that the curriculum holds distinctive aims and objectives and these are shared amongst all kinds of members of educational institutions across the nation.

This is to say that there are similar goals set across the communities of the nation despite the societal differences. To achieve these goals and objectives the society members must share ideas and cooperate and this fosters cohesion as members of different communities are inclined to come together and formulate ways by which they can attain their shared goals. The curriculum serving the purpose of cohesion fostering element amongst

members of the society. The curriculum holds the purpose of effective societal problem solving.

Basing on one of the ideologies on which education is found, it can be easily said that education can be used for effective societal problem solving, whereby the curriculum happens to be an integral part of the education system. Adopting such an ideology thus education for problem solving, it means that the curriculum in this case must pertain to such an ideology. Whereby it has to include activities and experiences that will allow students attain effective methods of problem solving. In this case the curriculum being used as a tool for effective problem solving.

If student undergo experiences of such a curriculum it means they will positively contribute to their particular societies in terms of problem solving. Hence the curriculum depicting the purpose of effective problem solving in the society. Brosnan (1999, p64) agrees by saying that “ the individual is a uniquepersonalitywho finds his greatest satisfaction in self-expression in response to the changing world”. Thus humans find it less of a burden when they speak out their suggestions and solutions to particular problems affecting the society and this is exactly what the curriculum offers through the educational system. The curriculum works as tool for awareness in the society. In the experiences included in the educational curriculum, there are relevant topics that each and every person is to be aware of, for example in Social studies are concerninghuman rights, child and women’s welfare. These are some of the important things that are rendered to the students under the guidance of the curriculum, when these learners accommodate

such ideas and disseminate them to those that happen to be of a shared society as these learners, the curriculum may work as an agent of awareness.

This would be so as the learners would function as messengers in their societies as they will let the others know their rights and entitlements. Hence the curriculum serving the purpose of an awareness agent in the society. The curriculum serves the purpose of societal problem identification. This idea comes about during the development of the curriculum, where a number of steps are covered one of which is that of identifying the background of a nation before coming up with the curriculum.

As the professionals struggle to come up with a basis for a country they also realise the problem that a nation goes through both in the social economic and cultural context. These problems are implicitly addressed in the activities that are included in the curriculum, thus for example commerce studies which equips students with commercial skills, may help eradicate financial problems that members of the society encounter. Hence the curriculum serving the function of problem identification and solution implementation in the society. The curriculum as an element for cultural preservation and continuity in the society.

Knowing that different societies hold different beliefs and values, the curriculum put into account these differences. This is done when the professionals are formulating the curriculum they tend to include some of the major beliefs and values that the children must be equipped with in order to achieve cultural preservation and continuity. Inclusion of experiences that

hold cultural values does not only ensure cultural continuity but also enable the students to recognise their national and cultural identities, how they are developed, and how they can be maintained in their respective societies (O'Neill, 1990; p78).

Thus the curriculum being in the position of enhancing cultural preservation and continuity in the society. Ethical function of the curriculum The curriculum being at the centre of the education system, it holds all sorts of functions along with it, one of which includes social control. In this case the curriculum helps in maintenance of law and order in the society, whereby the curriculum gives learners the access to instruction for proper behaviour and personal conduct, for example, at schools children are taught not to steal from others rather to ask for whatever they want in a polite manner.

This is the expected mode of conduct which helps reduce cases of increased rates of thieves as these youngsters are nurtured to behave in the required way in their early stages of life. In this case inclusion of such elements in the curriculum enables members of the society to be morally sound. Hence the curriculum serving the function of ensuring ethical conduct. The curriculum helping in shaping the society The International Educational Agency (I. E. R) report (2006, p3), pin pointed that the curriculum as the core of the education system helps equip students with better skills of reflection which is a vital element for students to grow as learners and as useful citizens of the society. Coupled with the skills of gathering and organising information students have constant opportunities to practice responsible self-direction in the society. In addition, much of the curriculum is concerned with allowing

students to learn about how people live in other places, times and how they are expected to influence the society.

These understandings help students to develop high levels of self-awareness. This all can be achieved through the curriculum hence the curriculum helping in shaping the society by producing students that will be able to effectively self-guide themselves in the society. Conclusion Despite the strengths that govern the curriculum, there are a lot of shortfalls that can be corrected, for example inclusion of the rights of those in minority, thus the disabled, elderly just to mention a few. These also happen to be part and parcel of the society, whereby the topics of awareness included in the curriculum seem to dwell much on the abled.

Consideration of teacher's expertise when it comes to their familiarity with the materials and methods prescribed to be used in the teaching and learning process, this is to say that the curriculum indicates that it assumes that teachers are conversant with the materials they are expected to use in the teaching and learning process. Even though the curriculum assigns teachers to particular topic to teach, it does not opt for a follow up on whether there is observation of the prescribed topics and see if the required values are really being imparted on to the learners for the society's benefit.

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