

Book Review: Language Curriculum Design

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Abstract

The purpose of book reviews as evaluations or critiques is to inform readers and rate the worth of a work. The Language Curriculum Design book by Nation and Macalister (2009) covers the processes involved in the curriculum design process, elaborates on them, provides justifications, and offers opportunities to practice and apply them. This review is an expansion of fourteen chapters. Chapter 1 offers an overview of Chapters 2 through 8, which outline the primary steps of the curriculum design process. The ninth chapter outlines a variety of methods for covering these steps. Involving students in curriculum design, selecting and updating course materials, innovation theory, retraining teachers, and assisting both teachers and students in utilizing a course are discussed in Chapters 10 through 14. Beginning with chapter 1, which provides an overview of language curriculum design, chapters 2 through 8 cover environmental analysis, need analysis, principles, objectives, content and sequencing, format and presentation, monitoring and assessment, and evaluation. In the meantime, chapter 9 provides an overview of curriculum design, while chapters 10 through 13 detail negotiated Syllabi, adopting and altering an existing course book, and implementing change. Planning an In-service course, with the final chapter covering Teaching and Curriculum design.

Keywords: Book Review, Language Curriculum Design, Monitoring & Assessment, Evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum discussions are always intriguing. According to the book's writers, curriculum or course design is primarily a "how-to" activity; hence, a substantial portion of this book is devoted to describing the processes involved in the curriculum design process as well as elaborating and justifying these steps. In addition, curriculum design may be viewed as a form of writing, and as such, it can be analyzed as a process by considering its internal and external components. According to the book's description, the curriculum design model consists of three outer rings and an inner circle that has been subdivided. Both the outer and inner circles of the scheme constitute the curriculum. The curriculum is represented by the inner circle.

The outer circles (principles, environment, and needs) contain practical and theoretical concerns that will have a significant impact on the actual process of course development. The writers provide an extensive list of course design considerations at the beginning of the text. These included the learners' present knowledge and gaps, the available resources, including time, the teachers' expertise, the curriculum designer's strengths and limits, and teaching and learning concepts. If such elements are not taken into account, the course may be inappropriate for the circumstance and learners for whom it is intended, as well as ineffectual and inefficient as a means of promoting learning. In the curriculum design procedure, these aspects are evaluated in three sub-processes: environment analysis, needs analysis, and principle application. The outcome of environment analysis is a prioritized list of factors and an evaluation of their effects

on the design. A realistic list of language, idea, or skill items is the outcome of a requirements analysis, which takes into account the present competency, future needs, and desires of the learners. The application of principles entails determining the most essential principles to apply and then monitoring their use throughout the whole design process. The application of principles yields a curriculum that provides the maximum support for learning.

The inner circle is centered on aims. This is intended to emphasize the need of having well-defined course objectives. The content and sequencing of Chapter 1 as part of the inner circle represents the objects to be learned in a course and the sequence in which they occur, as well as the substance of the concepts if this is used as a vehicle for the items rather than a goal. The language content of a course must be taken into account, even if it is not given as a single component. Consideration of content ensures that there is something useful for learners to learn in order to advance their command of the language, that they are maximizing their return on investment in terms of the usefulness of what they will encounter in the course, and that they are covering everything they need to cover for a well-rounded understanding of the language. The format and presentation section of the inner circle depicts the structure of the course's lessons or units, as well as the strategies and types of activities that will be employed to facilitate learning. This is the portion of the curriculum that the students are most familiar with. It is essential that it be guided by the finest available teaching and learning concepts. The monitoring and evaluation section of the inner circle represents the necessity to pay close attention to watching learning, evaluating its outcomes, and providing learners with feedback on their progress. It is frequently excluded from commercially developed courses. It gives information that can lead to modifications in the majority of the remaining curriculum design steps.

According to the author, the book gives practice and application possibilities for the steps. Chapter 1 provides an overview of Chapters 2 through 8, which detail the primary curriculum development phases. Chapter 9 describes numerous methods for covering these phases. Involving students in curriculum design, selecting and modifying course books, innovation theory, retraining teachers, and assisting teachers and students in utilizing a course are discussed in Chapters 10 through 14. In addition, each chapter concludes with a case study project related to the chapter's central discussion. Each chapter's development will be highlighted in the sections that follow. Last but not least, this book is certainly worth reading, and this review is the reviewer's subjective representation of those sentiments. The objective of this review is to inform the reader about the book's content and to convey the reviewer's opinion of the book's quality.

DISCUSSIONS

This part will highlight the core of Language Curriculum design book by Nation and Macalister (2009). Chapter 1 provides an overview of Chapters 2 to 8 which are the major steps in the curriculum design process. Chapter 9 describes several ways in which these steps can be covered. Chapters 10 to 14 take up important issues in curriculum design, namely involving learners in curriculum design, choosing, and modifying course books, innovation theory, retraining teachers and helping teachers and learners make use of a course.

Chapter 1 is a summary of chapters 2 through 8. Included is a review of aspects of the curriculum development procedure. The authors begin by emphasizing the three-part structure of the inner and outer circle of the curriculum design model, which includes environmental considerations, identifying needs, principles guiding the design of curriculum activities,

curriculum goals, content, and sequencing, locating a format and presenting material, monitoring and assessment, and course evaluation. Each aspect of this argument will be expounded upon in chapters 2 through 8. The authors also include, as the final section of this chapter, Tasks and Case Studies to study a published course and leading questions on how to apply the model's components to provide an overview of course planning. Particularly for case study projects, the writers examine the Nations and Crabbe (1991) case study to meet the curriculum design process's components.

Chapter 2 begins with a discussion of an environmental limitation and an example of an environment analysis. Learners, teachers, and the situation are constrained by environmental factors. The authors present a checklist of general restrictions, specific constraints, and the impact of the constraint on curriculum development. The authors advise that in order to properly comprehend the constraints, it is necessary to investigate the nature of the restrictions in the working environment of the teacher or curriculum designer as well as past studies on the constraint. Among the principal restrictions explored and analyzed by the researcher are the constraints of time, as seen in figure 2.2 of this book for the continual explanation (See page 19). The final point consists of steps in environment analysis, followed by activities on the analysis of a variety of limitations, assessing the teaching environment, and comparing the teaching environment to the case study.

Beginning on page 24, the third chapter focuses on Need Analysis. There are five subchapters detailing the various foci of need analysis in relation to the three sorts of need: necessity, lacks, and wants. The focus of necessity and deficiency is on proficiency and the context of use. Self-report, proficiency testing, observation and analysis, evaluation of prior research, and corpus analysis are suggested approaches for analyzing proficiency and circumstance. Wants, meanwhile, concentrate on desires, and their utilization can be recognized through self-report and observation. In addition, the authors describe methods to identify needs through self-report, diary writing, and analysis of the written product. Other subchapters detail need analysis tools, need analysis evaluation, and need analysis difficulties. This chapter has three points for discussion as an assignment. What type of information to seek for and how to identify it as a necessity, a deficiency, or a wish; where to look to find that information; what questions teachers must answer to implement the plan; and what do teachers think about the need analysis process? And how can needs be identified? Regarding the case study project, the author poses a query based on Friederichs and Pierson (1981) formats, as well as Shaw (1991) and Parkhurst (1990) for interview and questionnaire format.

Methods and twenty curriculum design principles are detailed in chapter 4, along with twenty curriculum design principles. The authors remark at the outset of this chapter that relatively few instructors or researchers follow any technique or approach in their language instruction. In addition, as noted by the authors, a "method" approach to curriculum design seems to result in some parts of curriculum design being well-considered and supported by research, while other aspects are disregarded or poorly considered. In their analysis of methods such as Total Physical Response and quiet way, Richards and Rodgers (1986) have shown this fact most clearly.

The twenty principles are as follows: content and sequencing (eight principles), format and presentation (ten principles), and monitoring and evaluation (ninety-two principles). How to apply the list of principles to curriculum design is the final point. Then, tasks associated with

principles in a course and how to assess teaching activity to determine which principles have been implemented are discussed. For case study project, students, teachers, or curriculum designers are required to identify and analyze overlapping principles by comparing the twenty principles based on pedagogical perspective, focusing on curriculum design and teacher training, proposed by the authors with the ten principles by Ellis (2005).

Chapter 5 addresses Objectives, Content, and Sequencing. Instructions for Determining or Verifying the Content and Sequence of a Course, Objectives and Content The Course's Units of Progression, What Is the Function of the Progression? (Vocabulary, Grammar, Functions, Discourse), Abilities, Subskills, and Strategies, Concepts, Task-Based Syllabi, Sequencing the Course Content, Linear Sequencing Methods and a Modular Sequencing Method Tasks for this chapter pertaining to Verb form covered in beginner's language instruction books The subject matter of a textbook, Specifying the course's objectives. In the meantime, the case study project involved an investigation of the sort of content used in the curriculum design project and the incorporation of Savage and Storer's (1992) concepts regarding the content to be implemented in the classroom.

Chapter 6 relates to Language Format and Presentation Curriculum design. It consists of six subchapters, including format and other aspects of the curriculum design process, a guideline for deciding a format, following a set format, blocks and threads, techniques and activities, task and presentation, and a final section containing tasks for examining the lesson format and teaching techniques, followed by a case study comparing and contrasting three published coursebooks.

Chapters 7 and 8 are the final two chapters emphasized by chapter 1. Chapter 7 on monitoring and assessment featured monitoring and assessment guidelines as well as monitoring and assessment kinds, including placement assessment, observation of learning, short-term achievement assessment, diagnostic assessment, accomplishment assessment, and proficiency assessment. This chapter also discusses the criteria for a reliable, valid, and practical assessment. In the meantime, chapter 8 describes a component of Evaluation. Starting with the definition of evaluation, the steps in evaluation, the purpose and audience of the evaluation, the type and focus of the evaluation, gaining support for the evaluation, gathering the information, formative evaluation as a course component, and the outcome of the evaluation are discussed. Both chapters provide tasks on how to prepare an evaluation, create a placement test, and conduct test-based evaluations.

Chapter 9 describes numerous methods for covering these phases. It is about Curriculum design approaches. It examines curriculum design models, curriculum design practices, curriculum design starting points, the curriculum design procedure, and decisional approaches to curriculum design. In the tasks section, to acquaint curriculum designers with the techniques, the author gives curriculum design comparison models. The author also offers a case study project to compile a list of the phases and path taken by curriculum designers as part of the curriculum design process.

Chapters 10 to 14 address major topics in curriculum design, including the involvement of students in curriculum design in Chapter 10 (named negotiated syllabus or Process Syllabus) and the inclusion of students in curriculum design in Chapters 12 and 14. (see page 149-158). This chapter gives instances of negotiated syllabi in the classroom, prerequisites for a negotiated syllabi, some components negotiated form syllabi, negotiating assessment, as well as the benefits and drawbacks of a negotiated syllabi. Problems with implementing a negotiated curriculum and

how to construct a negotiated curriculum design strategy are the focus of the assignment and case study.

Adopting and adapting an existing course book is the topic of Chapter 11, which relates to selecting and customizing course books. The relationship between the course book, the students, and the teachers, as well as the input of the students and teachers to the curriculum design process. In addition, this chapter highlights the teachers' participation in the layout of course materials and their capacity to assess a course book. The author then provides an explanation of evaluating the evaluation forms, presents the results, and concludes with a task and case study on building a course book evaluation form, scheduling evaluation of course books, demonstrating how to use course books, and evaluating course books.

The 12th chapter is about transformation and innovation. Beginning with processes for introducing change, recognizing the need for change, determining the scope of the change, implementing a realistic change, gaining teacher support, and employing a variety of change strategies, management, and long-term support. Task and case study includes analysis of a failed change, a school change program, and an examination of teacher belief.

Chapter 13 discusses teacher retraining. Planning an effective workshop for the teacher, procedures and activities for achieving the goals, understanding and remembering the concepts, experiencing and evaluating, creating material, planning lessons and units of work, problem solving, sequencing the workshop's components, and evaluating the workshop. To construct the conference workshop for the in-service training, including how to study the research principles.

The final chapter reviewed the theory of teaching and curriculum design in relation to the component of assisting teachers and students with course use. This chapter addresses environmental analysis, need analysis, principles, goals, content and sequencing, format and presentation, monitoring and assessment, evaluation, curriculum design, learner autonomy, and subsequent tasks.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Since constructing a curriculum or course is primarily a "how-to" activity, this book devotes much time to defining the stages of curriculum design as well as elaborating and justifying these procedures. The book also provides opportunities for practicing and applying the steps. Although curriculum design is a "how-to" activity, the stages must be defined in general terms so they can be applied in a number of contexts. Such a description would only be vivid if there were numerous real-world instances of the employed steps. This is accomplished in the following manner in each chapter of this book: 1 Exemplifications from the authors' experience and published research are provided. There are two tasks that enable readers to relate the processes to their own experiences. There are descriptions of three case studies and suggestions for additional reading that will connect the readers of this book with the experiences of others. Additionally, it is necessary to consider, Curriculum development requires the integration of knowledge from numerous fields of Applied Linguistics, such as research on language acquisition, teaching methods, assessment, language description, and materials production. Curriculum design is crucial to the study of applied linguistics in numerous ways. Language Curriculum Design is broadly relevant for ESL/EFL language education courses around the globe since it combines strong research/theory with cutting-edge practice.

Finally, this book is excellent as a source of curriculum design material for all groups, including novice and experienced teachers. Even if there are negotiations due to the demands of students and teachers, novice teachers may require assistance, particularly in terms of material development or negotiated syllabus, so that their understanding in constructing a syllabus aligns with the phases of the curriculum design approach and methodologies. If this book is used as a key resource and source of reading in higher education courses for EFL pre-service teachers, instructors must provide students with explicit instructions and support on how to perform the assigned tasks.

CONCLUSIONS

The book *Language Curriculum Design* discusses concepts and methods used by practitioners of curriculum design, particularly teachers and lecturers. The key steps in the curriculum design process are explained. Finally, this review demonstrates the elements of the book. The components of curriculum design covered in Chapters 1–8 include environmental analysis, need analysis, methods, and principles for curriculum design, goal formulation, selection and verification of the content and sequencing, format, and presentation of curriculum design, monitoring and assessment, and evaluation formulation. The following chapter, Chapter 9, discusses and explains various concepts and methodologies used in curriculum design. The final four chapters address crucial curriculum design challenges, including integrating students in curriculum design, selecting and updating course materials, innovation theory, retraining teachers, and helping teachers and learners make use of a course. Each chapter the authors also provide tasks and case study as the examination and exercises for the learners in understanding the content of the chapters provided. As a part of this review, strength, weaknesses, and suggestion for the book also provided by the reviewer.

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