

## Overview of the Visual Arts Curriculum, and Its Relationship with Evaluation and Instruction.

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Evaluation and Instruction play very important roles in curriculum implementation. As a result, the two concepts are often enshrined in the curriculum document. This article therefore examined the Visual Arts curriculum and its relationship with evaluation and instruction. Furthermore, the roles of Evaluation and Instruction in curriculum planning and implementation were investigated. The article was approached as follows: Overview of curriculum; Overview of Art Education and the Visual Arts curriculum; Evaluation; Instruction; and Relationship between curriculum, instruction and evaluation. It was revealed that curriculum, evaluation and instruction are inextricably linked. That, while the Visual Arts curriculum is planned by the curricularist, instruction is what the Visual Arts teacher plans to realize the curriculum; that, evaluation is an enterprise carried out by the teacher at the implementation level. The findings were discussed as they apply to the Art Education Programme.

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## Introduction

Evaluation and instruction are two critical factors often included in the curriculum document. The two factors have been found to play a key role in curriculum implementation.

The purpose of this article therefore is to examine the Visual Arts curriculum and its relationship with evaluation and instruction. This attempt is further intended to clarify the roles of evaluation and instruction in relation to the Visual Arts curriculum. It is expected that this effort will challenge the Art Educator to take the afore-mentioned two concepts seriously in his process of implementing the curriculum. The article has been approached in the following order:

- (1) Overview of curriculum generally.
- (2) Overview of Art Education and the Visual Arts curriculum.
- (3) Evaluation
- (4) Instruction
- (5) Relationship between curriculum, instruction and evaluation

## Overview of Curriculum

The general assumptions about curriculum are exciting. The term is used in different ways by school teachers, parents, educators among others. Some people see it as the academic package for the learner while some others perceive it as teacher's direction versus students' activities. The dictionary has this definition "subjects included in a course of study or taught at a particular school, college etc" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Some refer to it

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as learning contents and other activities that take place in the school. Doll, R.C. (1996;15) stated that the “curriculum of a school is the formal and informal content and process by which learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills and alter attitudes, appreciations and values under the auspices of that school” In its simplistic form, Aigbomian and Iyamu (2001) stated that curriculum is an organized set of learning materials which includes their methods of presentation and procedure for evaluating their learning.

### **Curriculum and Conceptualization**

An overview of curriculum will certainly refresh our minds as it recalls where we are coming from. Etymologically, curriculum derives from the Latin word *currere* meaning to run and was conceived as a course of study. Curriculum being a relatively new discipline has been defined severally by scholars. Its analytic, eclectic and normative nature has possibly made it rather difficult to lend itself to a single definition. Incidentally, little was known about this discipline until the 1970s.

The chronology of the curriculum process of development can best be summarized in Urevbu (1984) on the state of the field. He noted that the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as stated by Kliebard (1968 and 1970) was the dominance of what he referred to as the traditional curriculum scholars. The traditionalists referred to according to Urevbu were as follows; Taba 1962, Saylor and Alexander 1974; Smith and Stanley and Shores 1950 and a host of others. These scholars he asserted fell under the considerable shadow of Ralph Tyler 1950. It was clear that the activities of these traditionalists which had continued to raise questions have not for several decades left us with “little attempt to develop alternative modes of thinking to the dominant models” put in place by the traditionalist (Urevbu, 1983;70). Urevbu however summed up the various approaches as mere guidance for neophyte because the “writings do not advance our understanding of the curriculum beyond a fairly general level” (Urevbu, 1983;70). He went on to add that the traditionalists’ concepts have however been criticized for being vague, subjective and specifically “these definitions clearly, ignore the school’s social role in the distribution of different forms of knowledge and hence power, to different group of people” (Urevbu, 1983;68).

Before preceding further to state specifically some definitions of curriculum, it is needful to remark that the perennial exercise of conceptualization of curriculum has been observed to be a problem that is glued to mere semantics or phraseology as writers revisit what others have expressed in their own style. Aigbomian and Iyamu (2001) however noted that the process of conceptualization has guided and provided direction to the schooling process. That is to say, no definition is actually useless as they went on to stress that the effort helps to clarify and proffer solutions to basic issues and questions that affect the schooling process.

An example of these definitions among others that have the aforementioned criticism is that of Seweje in Aigbomian and Iyamu (2001). Seweje defined curriculum as “the operational medium through which the school as unit co-ordinates the patterns and process of transmission of desirable learning experiences from one generation to the other” Aigbomian and Iyamu (2001;19). Be that as it may, the authors noted that while the definition is seen to portray the learning process as extending beyond the school (planned or unplanned), there is the inculcation of worthwhile or desirable aspects of the culture in the learner. The above definition also sees what goes on in the school as learning experiences. Urevbu (1984) identified the use of the word ‘experiences’ in Bobbit’s definition. He added that similar definitions include those of Norton and Norton (1936), Vernon (1969), Smith, Stanley, and Shores 1957 and that of Kearney and Cook 1960). All these definitions attracted the earlier

criticisms of the traditionalists' perspective.

It is necessary to point out at this point that the fluid nature of the curriculum is also responsible for the multi-dimensional conception. As a borrowing discipline from psychology, History and Sociology among others, curriculum would certainly yield a relative definition. Aigbomian and Iyamu went on to point out some dimensions of curriculum: the curriculum–syllabus dualism; curriculum– instruction dualism; and curriculum – education dualism.

Urevbu, A.O. (2008) further identified other terms used to define curriculum. They are official curriculum; operational curriculum; hidden curriculum; the null curriculum and the extra curriculum. He however cautioned that the above curricular conceptions have significant contributions to the schooling process. He expressed hope that there has been a shift since 1970 from the traditional conception to a study of how school systems are created, organized and made to function. This in fact is the position Urevbu has maintained as indicated in his inaugural lecture titled *Creating the Schools We Deserve: Reflections on Education; Curriculum and Pedagogy*; University of Benin. (Urevbu, 1997)

### **Overview of Art Education and the Visual Arts Curriculum**

The emergence of Art Education dates back to about 200 years ago. Art Education began in response to the industrial revolution, a discipline concerned with art teaching as a practice and the field of inquiry which studies teaching and learning art. The object of this discipline therefore is that of enabling individuals acquire skills of artistic expression, designing, knowledge of art, its history and critical apprehension. Methods used in Art Education are similar to those used in social and psychological sciences. The field also involves typical studies that investigate children's artistic development, their creativity, relationship between drawing and socialization, aesthetic preferences and their impact on learning. It is important to add that as earlier mentioned, this discipline began in response to the industrial revolution, a social event which altered its rationale and character at a time when the progressive education movement was active: "and was deeply affected by the art styles of expression and abstraction in the first half of the twentieth century"(Efland, 1991;16). The following areas have been identified as foundations of Art Education:

- a) Aesthetics with its varied conceptions of art and its value in human experience,
- b) Art History, studio and criticism as content sources,
- c) Curriculum study to conceptualize goals, content, methods and their interrelation,
- d) History of Art Education which studies developments in relation to social changes and culture policy;
- e) Empirical research which describes and explains individual and group behaviours associated with art learning and aesthetic response" (Efland, 1991)

The overview of Art Education provided clearly defined the Art Education programme. However, it is instructive to mention that, the Visual Arts curriculum would depend also on the approach. Cunliffe (1998) explicated on two main approaches, the Creative Self-Expression and the Disciplined-Based Art Education (DBAE). In the Discipline-based art education, "creativity according to Cunliffe is seen "as unconventional behaviour that can occur as conventional art understanding are attained; untutored childhood expression is not regarded as necessarily creative"(Cunliffe,1998;49). The concept of the learner in the creative self-expression is that "learners are innately creative and expressive; need nurture rather than instruction; exposure to art images inhibits learners' natural creative development"

(Cunliffe,1998;49). In the discipline-based, the learners are actually art students who need instruction for the development of their understanding of art. The learners' creative development is enhanced by exposing them to adult images.

Three major goals of art education in the Discipline Based approach according to Chapman in Clark, G.A. (2008) are the development of personal expression of students and their awareness of artistic heritage and awareness of the role of art in society. Clark's position is suggestive of the need to teach the learner in order to achieve the stipulated goals of art education. He outlined characteristics of the Disciplined-Based Art Education curriculum content to include-Aesthetics, Art Criticism, Art History and Art productions.

The DBAE has been widely accepted and adopted for use in all parts of the world even in the United States of America (USA), where there is the feeling that the DBAE is Eurocentric. By this statement, it is implied that the Visual Arts curriculum is in harmony with the tenets of curriculum planning extensively discussed at the beginning of this article.

### **Overview of Evaluation**

Trochim, (2006) viewed evaluation as an activity that is concerned with using monitoring and information collected for making judgments about a project and in addition the use of such information for making changes and improvements. He went further to add that the activity is aimed at answering "agreed questions and to make a judgment against specific criteria. A good evaluation data must be collected and analysed systematically and its interpretation considered carefully, assessing value, or worth of something" taking a decision and using results of an evaluation are part of the process.

Bhola, (1990) also defined evaluation as "a means of assigning values or judgment, amount, degree, condition, worth, quality or effectiveness on something such as a programme".

The broadest practicable definition whoever is Stufflebeam's in Badmus, and Omoifo, (1998;21), "evaluation is the process of delineating obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives. This definition they explained, views evaluation as "an ongoing process" secondly as directed toward specific goal" that "requires using accurate and appropriate technique to collect information needed for decision making".

### **Goals of Evaluation**

The provision of useful feedback is the generic goal of most evaluations. Trochim stated that, the feedback (empirically driven feedback) is provided to diverse audiences such as sponsors, administrators, donors, staff, client groups and others. This feedback he added is said to be useful where it aids decision making or policy formulation.

Badmus, G.A. and Omoifo, C.N. (1998;26), however stated that "we talk of goals of evaluation at methodological level and we talk of roles of evaluation in a sociological level or pedagogical context" the sociological or pedagogical context is the realm of the formative and summative evaluation. "The formative role is used to improve instruction or an ongoing instruction course, curriculum or a programme. Such role does not preclude evaluation of the final process". The summative evaluation they stated "may be used to decide if an experimental or special instructional programme worth the money and time spent on it" (Badmus and Omoifo, 1998;26). Trochim also noted that formative evaluation strengthens or improves what is being evaluated and helps form it, through technology or examination of the programme delivery, quality of its implementation. This also, according to him include the

assessment of the organizational context, personnel and procedure inputs among others. In the case of summative evaluations it” examines the effects or outcomes of some objects on what happens subsequent to delivery of the programme or technology assessing whether the object can be said to have caused the outcome; determining the overall impact of the causal factor beyond only the immediate target outcomes; and estimating the relative costs associated with the objects” (Trochim, 2006).

Trochim argued that Formative evaluation includes “several evaluation types: needs assessment; evaluability assessment; structured conceptualization implementation evaluation; and process evaluation”. Summative evaluation could be divided into-outcome evaluation; impact evaluation; cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis; secondary analysis and meta-analysis”. Trochim went on to identify two main purposes of evaluation as “for learning and development” and the other “evaluation for accountability” (Trochim, 2006).

It is important to add the opinion of Cookson in Crawford (2007) when he stated that “true evaluation consists of an establishment of criteria collection of evidence to compare with the set criteria (baseline) and the arrival of a value judgment”. Crawford went on to outline some purposes of evaluation as presented by Case (1988). They are as follows: To confirm learners’ needs; to mobilize learner’s participation; to document learning outcomes; to identify needed programme changes and to communicate accountability to funders, administrators and others. Crawford however suggested six models/frame-works that are used in evaluation: objectives-Oriented, Management-Oriented; Consumer-oriented; Expertise-Oriented; Adversary-Oriented and Naturalistic and Participant – Oriented.

### **Overview of Instruction**

Generally speaking, instruction is the means or vehicle through which the school achieves learning. Effective instruction has been defined by Badmus, and Omoifo, (1998;28) as “the process of bringing about desirable modifications/changes in the abilities and perception of the learner”. This definition not only clarifies the concept of instruction but reveals that quality of instruction is dependent on some factors. This shows that instruction could be poor, or sound or effective. They went on to state that the function of instruction of the school as involving “activities that increase the child’s knowledge – the information base, and cognitive and physical skills of the learner” (Badmus, and Omoifo, 1998;28). Instruction therefore is teaching the curriculum content. They added that the task of guiding the learner in his learning and realizing his prospective career is a very important aspect of instruction

### **Relationship between Curriculum and Instruction**

Westbury (2007) viewed curriculum as an amorphous concept that has a wider connotation than most scholars have suggested, it observed that what appears dominant are stipulations about not what curriculum is but what it should be. He has therefore viewed curriculum as also “referring to the established programme of a school”. However as mentioned earlier in the overview of curriculum, the term is used in various ways by stakeholders in education.

The issue of curriculum conceptualization has been properly addressed in the overview of curriculum. The main thrust of this segment is having done also an overview of instruction is, the relationship between curriculum and instruction. The relationship between the two concepts has been described as intimate since instruction involves “the creation and implementation of purposefully developed plans for the teaching of curriculum content”. This process could also be referred to as “planning and teaching” (Yates, 2000). The fact that most

curriculum departments are referred to as curriculum and instruction is not unconnected with the intimacy that exists between the two concepts. “With curriculum being the content of what is taught along with an overall process of how that content is to be taught, and the instruction being the more detailed plans and the way those plans are implemented in order to teach the curriculum content, it becomes easy to understand that the two must be compatible in order to maximize student learning” (Yates, 2000).

Alkin (1973) noted that educators have often used curriculum and instruction interchangeably. He however expressed worry at the lack of focal specification as an evaluator could define his work as curriculum evaluation and go ahead to evaluate outputs of instructional programmes. In the same vein, according to him, another evaluator attempting to evaluate outputs of an instructional programme could define his focus as instructional evaluation.

However, consonant with the earlier position stated, Alkin viewed curriculum as consisting” intended learning outcomes; the results or ends of an instructional activity” while instruction on the other hand has to do with planning and teaching (Alkin, 1973).

A document of partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (2007) observed that curriculum and instruction determine what is taught and how it noted that the relationship between the two concepts is a very close one. It stated that, “curriculum is essentially a design, or roadmap for learning and as such focuses on knowledge and skills that are judged important to learn. Instruction is the means by which that learning will be achieved”. Instruction can be achieved through diverse approaches. For example, the teacher can effect instruction through problem-based learning (PBL) Cooperative Learning, (Marzano, Pickering, Pollock (2001), using real world contexts. These are part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century approaches identified by the partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (A document of Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2007). Laska (1984) argued that the instruction goes beyond the definition as equivalent to training or training and the concept of education. He also cited Macdonald (1965) and Bellack Kliebard (1977) as consenting to the idea that the terms instruction and curriculum respectively involved confusion of terms and notorious ambiguity.

### **Relationship between Evaluation and Instruction**

From the overview of Evaluation and Instruction earlier given, Evaluation is a process that concerns itself with using monitoring, and other information collected to make judgment and using such information to effect changes and improvements. As a document of partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (2007) puts it, “Instruction is the means by which that learning is achieved” (A document of Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2007)). This definition makes more sense when you have at the back of your mind that curriculum is a design, or road map for learning which focuses on knowledge and skills. The relationship therefore that exists between evaluation and instruction is such that cannot be divorced from each other.

Instruction like other programmes depends on evaluation to for both formative and summative purposes. On the other hand, evaluation cannot exist in isolation of programmes that require evaluation. Evaluation focuses on criteria to judge, worth or value of something or project. It focuses on something or project (Bhola, 1990).

Evaluation thus is an inextricable companion of instruction whose effectiveness is best appreciated when applied to a project. As could be deduced from the definition of formative evaluation “provide information to improve a product or process “(A design of evaluation,

Nova; and Iowa state evaluation could be said to be a hand maid of instruction. Evaluation relies on instruction to exhibit its relevance. In other words if there are no projects, products or process, there will be no premise for evaluating. Conversely, instruction cannot thrive without evaluation.

Finally, evaluation is instrumental to progress reviews which lead to improvement in programmes and projects. For instance instruction as defined by Wikipedia encyclopaedia is education and teaching. It is however clear that from time to time through evaluation of instruction; new approaches are evolved to improve teaching and learning. For instance, Hall, T. (2002) dwelt elaborately on differentiated instruction an improved instruction culminating in a process to address students' teaching and learning involving differing abilities in the same class. Several other approaches have been canvassed and popularized over time being outcomes of evaluation of instruction.

### **Relationship between Curriculum and Evaluation**

Aigbomian, D.O and Iyamu, E.O.S. (2001) viewed evaluation as an integral part of curriculum. As earlier discussed taking curriculum according to the document of partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills as a example, curriculum is “essentially a design, or roadmap for learning and as such focuses on knowledge and skills that are judged important to learn” (A document of Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2007)). Evaluation is required for effective learning and its development to take place. Evaluation is required also for its accountability. Goldstein (1969) also considers evaluation or feedback phase as an integral component of the social learning curriculum. Evaluation according to him is “based on the understanding that the educational process depends upon interaction of the contents, the teachers and the students which in combination significantly affect implementation of the curriculum”.

Yates, R. (2000) discussed the multiage and single grade classroom. It was noted that, the case of multiage classrooms explains better the close relationship that exists between instruction and curriculum. The flexibility of the curriculum to various structures meant to make instruction more efficient further explains the tie between curriculum and instruction. Teachers' instructional methods therefore, necessitate compatible manner that curriculum should be organized.

Urevbu, A.O. (2001) identified some functions of evaluation in curriculum development. This included; informing decision-makers. He went on to state three ideal types of evaluation- Bureaucratic, Autocratic and democratic evaluations. Self-evaluation and evaluation of outcomes are other functions of evaluation in curriculum development. Curriculum and evaluation are thus two inseparable concepts. For example, Suydam, M.N. (1990) also displayed this unity when she noted that set of standard provided for evaluating mathematics curricula and the quality of the curriculum as well as students' achievements.

The relationship therefore that exists between curriculum and evaluation is inextricable. Evaluation is required in curriculum both at the formative and summative levels. Curriculum requires evaluation for improvement of teaching and learning in schools.

### **Conclusion**

The article revealed that the Art Education curriculum is planned in accordance with the basic principles of curriculum planning globally. The content areas of the Art Education programme and the Disciplined Based Art Education approach which is in use all over the world were discussed. The article further revealed that curriculum and evaluation are

inextricably related as a result of their complementary roles. It was also discovered that instruction cannot also be divorced from curriculum, just as evaluation and instruction are interwoven

Suffice it to state that the Art Education curriculum is planned by curricularists, but instruction is the Visual Arts teacher's plan to carry out the content. Instruction is thus his vehicle to translate the curriculum into reality. Similarly after the content has been presented to the learner, evaluation is needed to find out the effectiveness of the programme.

In the same vein, it was revealed that evaluation cannot be isolated from product, programme or project. Thus evaluation relies on instruction to be effective and relevant. Therefore it is clear that the three components are interwoven and inextricably related.

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