Improving Curriculum Design and Development: A Case Study from the University of Guyana

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Abstract
The curriculum is a very important document which details how learning and teaching is to be done. Since this document is a guide for learning, it must be properly planned, designed and developed, if it is to achieve success in its implementation stage. Bearing this in mind, this case study centres its attention on the analysis and evaluation of a Spanish course curriculum document from the University of Guyana. The aim of this paper is to highlight those areas that are deficient in the current course curriculum, analyse and revise them, and make recommendations for improvements. Information about the University of Guyana, along with its vision, mission and value statements are presented. Then, a discussion ensues on curriculum planning, designing and development, paying specific attention to what curriculum entails and all those issues that must be addressed if it is to have relevance and significance. A thorough study is conducted of the course curriculum, highlighting both the positives and the negatives. Subsequently, recommendations are made for changes to the course curriculum and conclusions are drawn from the report. The intention is that this new curriculum be used to revolutionise learning and teaching at the University of Guyana, and in all those Universities where learning and teaching is deficient.

Keywords: curriculum, spanish translation, constructive alignment, curriculum planning, curriculum design, curriculum development, higher education

1. Introduction
Biggs and Tang (2011) reveal that “Since 2000 there have been dramatic changes in the nature of higher education. It is not just that participation rates are higher than ever [...], but that these and other factors have altered the main mission of higher education and modes of delivery” (p. 3). This means that newer pedagogical approaches are being sought to promote high-quality education. The Bologna Process (2010) of 1999 has had a profound impact on the delivery of high-quality higher education (HE). Since then, there has been a clamour for teaching effectiveness, which has intensified over the years. HE learning and teaching must move away from teacher-centred strategies and embrace student-centred approaches, due the increased number of students, entering tertiary institutions, who possess different learning abilities.

This is where the concept of curriculum comes in. It is the curriculum that determines if a teacher-centred or student-centred approach will be adopted. The curriculum is a blueprint of the pedagogical process. It clearly depicts all the desired expectations for student learning. According to Prevedel (2003, p. 8), “Most simply put, a curriculum is a guide for learning”. The term curriculum has been derived from the Latin word ‘currere’ signifying a ‘race course’ or a runway on which one runs to attain an objective. Accordingly, a curriculum is the instructional and the educative programme through which learner achieve their goals, ideals and aspirations of life. It is curriculum through which the general aims of a school education receive concrete expression.

Taking into consideration the above, this curriculum review report centres its attention on the analysis of a Spanish course curriculum document from the University of Guyana (UG). The aim of this report is to highlight those areas that are deficient in the current course curriculum, analyse and revise them, and make recommendations for improvements.

Information about the UG, along with its vision, mission and value statements are presented. Then, a discussion ensues on curriculum planning, designing and development, paying specific attention what curriculum entails. An analysis is conducted of the course curriculum, highlighting both the positives and the negatives. Subsequently, recommendations are made for changes to the course curriculum and conclusions are drawn from the report. Further, the old and new course curriculums are presented as an appendix, along with rubrics for all the assessment tasks, and a constructively-aligned lesson. The intention is that this new curriculum be used to revolutionise learning and teaching at the University of Guyana, and in all those Universities where learning and teaching is deficient.

2. About The University
The UG is the only HE institution in Guyana. The University was established by an Act of Parliament in April, 1963. Its aim was “to provide a place of education, learning and research of a standard required and expected of a University of the highest standard, and to secure the advancement of knowledge and the diffusion and extension of arts, sciences and learning throughout Guyana” (The University of Guyana Act, 1963).
One of the four goals in the UG Strategic Plan (2009-2012, p. 28) is “To achieve higher quality learning and teaching aligned with expanded national needs, especially in science and technology”. Regrettably, the UG is not fulfilling its mandate. The curriculum has not been modified in more than 30yrs. The only existing pedagogical method is the traditional F2F interaction, where the teacher is the sage of the stage, and where students are expected to take in the ‘sagely knowledge’ like sponges. In other words, all learning is teacher-centered. There are no innovative technologies being used to promote diversified learning and teaching.

In light of the above, the UG student population is dwindling rapidly. Many students opt to pursue undergraduate studies at foreign universities, due to the inability of UG’s courses and programmes to sufficiently improve their learning outcomes. Those that remain exhibit their frustrations, demanding a different and better approach to course delivery, as the present mode is quite obsolete.

This is the present state of affairs that plagues this institution of higher learning. There is a dire need for modernization through quality enhancement. Curricula need to be restructured to embrace creativity, application and life-long learning. In a world where technology is taking centre-stage, where the majority of students are computer literate and technology savvy, the University is left with no other option, if it intends to remain credible and authentic, but to integrate online learning and teaching, with a view to delivering high-quality 21st century higher education.

A. The University’s Aim
When the UG was established in 1963, it was stated that “The aims of the University are to provide a place of education, learning and research of a standard required and expected of a University of the highest standard, and to secure the advancement of knowledge and the diffusion and extension of arts, sciences and learning throughout Guyana” (The University of Guyana Act, April 19, 1963).

B. The University’s Mission
In 2001, the Academic Board formulated the mission of the University in the following terms: to discover, generate, disseminate and apply knowledge of the highest standard for the service of the community, the nation and of all mankind within an atmosphere of academic freedom that allows for free and critical enquiry.

C. The University’s Vision 2009 – 2012
The University will be academically stable and will have consolidated its curriculum in a manner that reflects the needs and constraints of Guyana and be on a trajectory to becoming a Centre of Excellence for the delivery of tertiary programmes, for its administration and management, and as a leader in research that contributes meaningfully to the development of Guyana and all mankind.

D. The Values
In pursuit of this vision and mission, the University will endeavour at all times to display the following core values:

a) Equal access regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, nationality, political, religious or social standing.
b) Equity in the treatment of employees and students of any gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, nationality, political, religious, or social standing.
c) A rewarding, enabling and safe environment where staff and students can perform to the best of their abilities and develop their careers.
d) A culture of responsible and respectful conduct by staff and students in all activities within and outside the university.
e) High standards of ethics and conduct in administration, management, organisational behaviour, research and teaching.
f) Responsiveness to the continuing, professional and higher education needs of Guyana.
g) High quality academic programmes and research.
h) An environment aimed at developing in its students, a respect for their country.
i) A campus environment that enables the learning experience of its students and fosters their lifelong relationship with the University.
j) Prudent fiscal management.
k) A financially viable institution.

E. The Goals
In pursuit of its vision, mission and values, the University seeks to:

a) Achieve higher quality teaching and learning aligned with expanded national needs, especially in science and technology.
b) Improve institutional governance, administration and management by statutory and structural adjustments.
c) Broaden the financial base of the university and enhance its ability to recruit and retain high quality staff.
d) Improve the teaching, learning and service environment.

The UG has come into the 21st century without a significant review of its governance structure despite its expansion to two campuses and seven faculties/schools. Its administrative arrangements and managerial practices for student management, human resource management,
financial management and procurement pre-date contemporary IT based systems and are being difficulty converted to contemporary levels. Records and archives are not fully indexed and administrative decisions rely excessively on personal memory of precedent and earlier decisions. The combined deficiencies are dysfunctional and inhibit efficiency in the fulfilment of academic contribution to national developmental targets.

3. Discussion On Curriculum Planning, Design And Development

If students are to have significant educational experiences, in order to maximise learning outcomes, then a properly planned, designed and developed curriculum would be the natural answer. A brief discussion takes place immediately below, concerning the pertinence of curriculum in learning and teaching.

A. What Is Curriculum?

The curriculum is an important element in which educational aims are reflected. In fact, the curriculum is determined by the aims of life and society, which are subject to constant change. Consequently, the aims of education are also subject to change and dynamism. A curriculum is a strategic plan of action, a structured document, a process, which promotes and fosters creativity, application and life-long learning by means of carefully defining the psycho-sociological philosophy of learning and teaching, goals and objectives, learning experiences, instructional practices and resources and assessments that encompass a programme of study. It verbalises the roles of students and teachers, throughout the pedagogical process. In essence, its purpose is to maximize student learning outcomes while ensuring that they experience “learning that matters” (Lunenburg & Irby 2006, p. 86).

B. Why Is Curriculum Important?

Any project, concept or initiative in life needs to be properly planned, if it is to be successful. It must have a framework which defines it. This is the method to be followed for everything, in which Education is no exception. When embarking on an initiative, one needs to ascertain that all of the plans have been appropriately drawn up. What is to be offered? What resources are available? What resources are required? What steps need to be taken? What are the likely goals to be attained? These are important questions that are addressed. Similarly, when applied to the field of education, and in educational institutions, these procedures to be followed give birth to curriculum.

“Nothing else in the arsenal of school reform can take the place of deciding how best to structure and sequence what is most important for students to know and be able to do so that students can and will succeed. Students need equal access to high-quality instruction. The job of curriculum is to provide teachers a structure for instruction so that they can balance the often competing forces of standards, tests, textbooks, and programmes. The curriculum provides the structure for management of teaching and learning as well as staff development. Without a curriculum’s structure, there is chaos” (Squires 2004, p. 5).

C. How And Why Has Curriculum Transformed Over The Years?

“Curriculum is the container that holds the institutional knowledge of what was the best of past instruction. Curriculum, viewed in this way, is a historical document. Curriculum is also a plan for the present. Curriculum represents how to improve in the future. Curriculum, while rooted in the present, takes the best of the past to make the future better” (Squires 2004, p. 5).

It is in this light that curriculum has transformed over the years and continues to do so, as time progresses. There is a felt need that the curriculum must seek to address student learning, and students must be the centre of it, since it is all about ‘what the student does’ (Tyler, 1949; Shuell, 1986). Owing to this, curriculum has undergone four major evolutions, over the years, and these will be discussed below.

D. Curriculum Development Models (CDMs)

Curriculum development is a constant process, always in search of significance to the learning environment. The curriculum - fundamentally shaped by the framework in which it is placed - improves as the process unfolds. Consequently, as curricula are in constant mutation, the CDMs must be understood, to gain deeper insights into transformation of curriculum over the years.

Smith (2000) reveals that there are four ways of approaching curriculum theory and practice. These are briefly summarised below:

1. Curriculum as a body of knowledge – In this discussion, the curriculum is seen as a syllabus which focuses on content delivery using effective teaching methods. It is very academic, theoretical and discipline-specific in nature. It basically provides a list of knowledge for students to learn. This list is compiled by the teacher or subject matter experts, and the teacher will implement with little or no guidance to aid learning progression. In fact, since curriculum is equated to syllabus, which emphasises content, teachers who adhere to this belief feel that the issue of curriculum no longer concerns them, once the content is taught to the learners effectively.

2. Curriculum as a product – This approach, based on Tyler’s (1949) linear model, and ratified by Taba’s (1962) model, affirms the importance of setting behav-
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ioal objectives. It focuses on what the learners are able to accomplish upon completion of studies. Based on systematic and organised planning, it assumes all learners have common goals and the required resources available to aid in learning. A needs assessment for such a curriculum is usually accumulated based on specific job skills required in a professional environment. It relies on the assumption that for any specific job, a full set of skills is readily identifiable.

3. Curriculum as a process – This approach typifies the constant students-teacher-content interaction, and fosters curriculum preparation and evaluation. It is not rigid and less structured, recognising variations in social groups and individual behaviours. It may be adjusted according to the needs communicated and evaluated by those involved in the learning process. It acts as an intervention strategy. Emphasis is on the ever-changing communication mediums between people and their environments. Such a curriculum attempts to identify learning outcomes on an individual basis. Stenhouse’s (1975) and Sharpes’ (1987) exploration is regarded as one of the best conceptualizations of the process model.

4. Curriculum as praxis – This approach, in many ways, is an expansion of the process model. Curriculum as praxis makes unequivocal statements about the interests it serves. Continual reference is made to collective human well-being and social justice. It highlights explicit commitment to the emancipation of the human spirit by collectively encouraging students and teachers to confront the real problems of their existence and their relationships through interaction, reflection and informed actions. This model is an expression of critical pedagogy (Grundy, 1987) which goes beyond positioning the learning experience within the experience of the learner.

Prevedel (2003), in her paper, also discusses three approaches to curriculum development - the traditional, the learner-driven and the critical. The characteristics of these are compared and contrasted with the four approaches by Smith (2000) by means of a table, presented below.

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<td>Syllabus and curriculum are equated; content delivery; a list of knowledge; theoretical and discipline-specific; teacher-directed; compiled and implemented by expert teacher; content taught effectively (effective methods), since curriculum holds no interest for teachers.</td>
<td>Traditional Goals set; learning experiences chosen; curriculum proposed, planned and evaluated; knowledge exists, thus is neutral, equitable, organised, transmitted, observable and measurable; predetermined goals; learning is linear and chronological; expert knowledge needed; skills-based; competency/performance-based; objective and measurable assessment to provide comparative scores and grades.</td>
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| Product | Setting objectives; systematic and organised planning; results-oriented; all learner have common goals, available resources and skills; needs assessment is done and accumulated for identifiable specific job skills. |

| Process | Constant interaction of students, teachers and content; curriculum evaluation and preparation; not rigid; less structured; recognises various social groups and individual behaviours; communicated and evaluated needs between people and environment; intervention strategy; learning outcomes identified. |

| Learner-Driven Learning goals from real-world roles articulated by students, who help plan curriculum; student-content interaction; builds on students’ declarative knowledge; relevant to students’ daily context; learning and teaching happens in social contexts, transparent and based on student-determined purposes; active participation in knowledge construction; assessment is on students’ contextualised goal, continuing, involving meta-cognitive strategies. |
E. The Curriculum and Constructive Alignment

Learning and teaching has been an age-old practice. Throughout the years, these phenomena have evolved in different ways, benefitting some students and forsaking others. In the olden days, the teacher was the sage of the classroom who directed the show from start to finish. For too long, learning and teaching were teacher-centred, with no real concern for what the student was expected to do. He was either bright or not. And whether he was bright or not determined if he succeeded or not. This kind of scenario was counterproductive and only ensured that students used low cognitive skills to complete tasks, thus resulting in a surface approach to learning.

Given the changing scenes in university teaching and learning today, the call for teaching effectiveness and the diverse student population with different learning abilities entering tertiary institutions, constructive alignment (CA) (Biggs & Tang, 2011) is the way to respond to these growing concerns about teaching and learning in the 21st century.

CA (Biggs & Tang, 2011) is the unity between intended learning outcomes (ILOs), learning and teaching activities (LTAs), and assessment tasks (ATs) and Grading, in an educational programme, where the connections between them are aligned intrinsically on the basis of the learning activities expressed in the outcomes statements. It is an approach to curriculum design that optimises the conditions for learning, where the teaching activities of the teacher and the learning activities of the student are both directed towards the same goal.

Constructive alignment is constructive because it is based on the theory that students construct meaning from the activities they do to learn. Alignment reflects the learning activities in the intended outcomes, expressed as a verb that has to be activated in the teaching to achieve the outcome. Once the verbs (such as reflect, hypothesise, solve, generate) are specified, it becomes clear what the LTAs to engage the student might be, and what the student needs to perform in the ATs. ATs verify that the outcome has been achieved. The LTAs as well as the ATs should be designed to meet the ILOs, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Aligning ILOs with LTAs, and ATs in Constructive Alignment
[Adapted from Higher Education Academy, 2011]

A course is constructively aligned when the learning objectives are clearly stated and communicated to the students, and the learning and teaching activities and the assessments match the learning objectives. In an aligned course, the teacher aligns the assessment tasks with the learning objectives such that the learning objectives are evaluated to see how well they have been achieved. Biggs and Tang (2011, chapter 1) present the tale of ‘Susan’ and ‘Robert’. ‘Susan’ is an intelligent student, self-motivated, and always derives deep learning from her studies, even if the approach is superficial. ‘Robert’, on the other hand, seems not too interested and adopts a surface learning style, since his aim is to pass the course only. The external motivation of Robert is effectively used to make him learn.

In an unaligned course, it is the teacher’s intention that the students learn to ‘analyse’ and ‘apply’. The assessments measure the ability to ‘identify’ and ‘memorise’. The ‘Roberts’ will complete the minimum requirements...
and will only study what is directly required in the exam, thus totally ignoring the ILOs. Figure 2 shows a schematic of an aligned and un-aligned course.

![Figure 2. Schematic showing an aligned vs. an un-aligned course](https://example.com/figure2)

Therefore, we can summarise that for CA, the following principles are pre-requisites, and must be carefully considered: (1) Defining ILOs; (2) Designing ATs to see how well students have met the ILOs; (3) Specifying TLAs to achieve ILOs, and (4) Determining Grading Criteria and Grade.

The value of CA in learning and teaching is priceless. CA is all about ensuring that there is harmony in the way students are expected to learn course content. This is not to be done haphazardly, but should be thoughtfully planned and crafted with the students in mind. The principal objective is to make learning student-centred, which is in sharp contrast to the traditional teaching approach. Shuell (1986) reveals that “it is helpful to remember that what the student does is actually more important in determining what is learned, than what the teacher does” (p. 429). In essence, students are encouraged to be the protagonists of their own learning. They are the ones who are responsible for taking control of their own learning during task execution. During task execution, students are expected to use high cognitive skills to realise tasks, stimulating higher order thinking and a deep approach to learning.

With the present knowledge of these curriculum development approaches, learning and teaching must transform in these modern times. Biggs and Tang (2011) establish that 21st century learning and teaching need to be founded on constructive alignment, hence the need to incorporate more current approaches in pedagogy. These approaches are not contradictory to each other; rather, the best aspects of each should be integrated into the curriculum. Since the curriculum must respond to societal needs, values and beliefs, it must embrace a critical approach and consider the social milieu of learners to help them cope with problems and derive lasting solutions. To this end, as learners are the nucleus of the educative process, the curriculum will have to learner-centered and emancipatory. Owing to this, the curriculum will also consider a product approach (proof of what students do as a result of learning) and a process approach (how each of these students learns).

The whole idea is to interweave the best features of these approaches into the curriculum to provide optimum learning to students to realise their potentials. If any higher education institution intends to remain credible and authentic, then it must embrace educational sustainability. Educational sustainability, through a cutting-edge curriculum, which most definitely includes the integration of learning technologies, will guarantee the promotion of positive learning, the ignition of learner enthusiasm for learning, and the provision of a strong foundation for creativity, application and life-long learning.
F. Values, Beliefs, and Ideologies in Curriculum Development

As has been the prevailing theme, the curriculum is fundamentally shaped by the framework or social setting in which it finds itself. In society, people cling to various values, beliefs and ideologies which shape how they think, act, feel and behave. Hill (1991, p. 6) establishes that these do not occur in isolation, but are in direct relation to their worldview of life, given that individuals “attach special priority or worth to them, and through which they tend to order their lives”. In addition, Rhodes (2003, p. 10) reveals that “Values, religious and belief contents have always been part of education, and these contents surface in most of the learning areas”. In other words, socio-cultural presuppositions hold important implications for education, as the different systems have to be accommodated in societal structures.

“Defining values, beliefs and ideologies in education is not an easy task and is a concern for many educators. These constitute a worthiness of a norm or a principle embedded in a person, a group (normally referred to as a culture group) a religion or a belief system” (Bailey 2000, p. 5). And in this light, it is absolutely necessary to note that in curriculum planning, design and development, these must be considered.

The lack of skills of educators to identify values, beliefs and ideologies in education (Rhodes, 2003) and their lack of knowledge about these systems will make it very difficult, if not impossible, to attain the aims of an outcomes based education (OBE) in this regard. In fact, a lack of clear directives for teachers about the promotion of values and beliefs within the curriculum hold implications for the attainment of educational goals and outcomes. The prevalence of the value, belief and ideological systems in curriculum must be acknowledged, identified, and promoted.

G. Situational Analysis And The Curriculum

How will one know that a curriculum is relevant to a specific context? How will one know if it makes sense, and if it carefully and thoughtfully addresses the needs of all concerned parties? The answer lies in the conduction of a situational analysis.

Maxwell (1981) outlined a structure for studying and evaluating school circumstances. In my estimation, a situational analysis (SA), in simple terms, has to do with identification, selection, analysis and evaluation of those relevant situations or factors - both internal and external - that govern curriculum design and development, in the educational institution. This type of approach uncovers the weaknesses and threats of a project, highlighting also its strengths and opportunities considering the present prevailing circumstances. In other words, it describes the exceptional socio-cultural values, beliefs and ideologies of the educational institution. An efficiently utilised situational analysis makes it possible to attain and even surpass the project expectations.

Another good working definition of a SA is that it’s an endeavor realised by curriculum planners and designers to collect and analyse information to aid them in the design, implementation and evaluation of curricular interventions. The type of data gathered focuses on the ones affected, reasons for their being affected, the gravity of the problem, and strategies and resources that may be used to engender the desired results.

A useful technique for determining the starting point of SA is a needs assessment (NA). According to Print (1993) and Febrivania (2011), a NA is a formal analysis that finds gaps between what is available and what is desired. In NA, the gaps or needs are arranged and analysed in priority of order. A NA is conducted using a 5-phase approach:

a) Formulating goal statements which are believed to be of great value to students.
b) Rating goal statements by assigning priorities.
c) Ranking the priorities.
d) Determining goal statements through teacher analysis or student tests and then finding discrepancies between what is preferred and what exists.
e) Developing plans to create or adjust curriculum to meet the discrepancies. Once analysed, the information is used to set appropriate aims, goals and objectives of the curriculum.

H. The Necessity Of A Situational Analysis In Initial Stages Of Curriculum Design

Any kind of effective planning requires information. Affecting a comprehensive situation analysis is the first step in gathering and using information. Situational analysis is vital at the initial stages of the curriculum planning and design cycle. A well documented situational analysis helps to meet the following conditions:

a) All stakeholders unite in an inclusive team-building exercise where they work together and take responsibility for shaping the curriculum according to desired specifications.
b) It identifies gaps or deficiencies in the available information, contributing towards the development of a curriculum reflective of societal values, beliefs and ideologies.
c) All stakeholders strongly support it. Policy-makers and decision-makers expect convincing arguments, particularly when it involves funds and resources allocation.
d) Reliable information about intervention needs, the requisite resources required and the results anticipated is used for planning, implementing and evaluating all phases of the project undertaken.

e) Accurate and current information provides a starting point for dialogue, a rationale for action, a determination of priorities and an establishing of those groups in need of special interventions, ensuring that these are adapted to the specific requirements, experiences, driving forces and strengths of all concerned parties involved.

f) Information collected presents a foundation against which future tendencies in curricular planning and development could be measured. It is necessary for assessing the outcomes of activities conducted, and for advancing current programmes. It is used as a monitoring and evaluation tool. In fact, successive reports are considered as revisions and upgrades of the soundly conducted analysis.

Febrivania (2011, p. 2) establishes that “SA can be conducted through consultation with students, parents, teachers, administrators and government officials, study analysis of relevant documents, such as course appraisal documents, government reports, ministry of education guidelines and policy papers, teaching materials, curriculum development, observation of teachers and students in relevant learning settings, survey of opinions of relevant parties, review of available literature, and looking at resources”. SA may be conducted using the four steps as shown in Figure 3.

I. Integrating Information And Communication Technologies (ICT) In The Curriculum

In the ambit of learning and teaching, there is a growing concern about the teaching methods used to maximise student learning. Educators agree that these must eliminate surface approaches - when students use low cognitive skills to execute tasks - in favour of deep approaches - when students use the appropriate level cognitive skills for task completion - to learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011). This state of affairs has arisen due given that the traditional approach to learning and teaching is no longer adequate to effectively address and improve student learning outcomes.

With the passage of time, thankfully, newer approaches to learning and teaching developed, one of them being the integration of ICTs in the pedagogical process. Technology has made the process even more convenient, as information is exchanged with rapidity over the World Wide Web (WWW). Technology has made it so much easier that we can communicate synchronously with people who are in different time zones. ICTs have now taken over the world by storm, so much so that new concepts like ‘online learning’, ‘technology-based learning’, and ‘Internet-based education’, among others, have become synonymous with sound educational practices.

Online education is one significant way to cater for diverse learning styles. Online learning and teaching has to do with the technologies and technological applications used to deliver course content. It is all about getting students to move away from the full face to face (F2F) modality, in favour of a virtual environment where each and every one would be able to work at their own pace. In support of this valid contention is Brown (2005) who establishes that since the introduction of online learning and teaching, there has been a rapid improvement in student learning outcomes.

It is undeniable that many tertiary institutions are heading in the direction of incorporating technology in on and off campus education delivery. There must be reasons for this move. For learners, online learning is not time, location or distance-bound. Students are continuously involved in synchronous and asynchronous com-
munication with colleagues and the course tutor. They can access course materials anytime. In addition, learners can take online courses while working, therefore contextualising learning. For teachers, instruction can be done from anywhere. They can update and modify materials, with learners seeing changes immediately. They can readily give synchronous or asynchronous support to students who may be having difficulties with course material, assuring the students of a smooth learning journey.

It would not be jejune to say that online learning is quickly becoming a household name in higher education (HE), urging educators to tackle current assumptions about pedagogy. In fact, HE administration sees itself (HE), urging educators to tackle current assumptions quickly becoming a household name in higher education. It would not be jejune to say that online learning is logical innovation for HE in this millennium and beyond existing evidence of the transformative power of ICTs across the world, the fact that it will be the major technological innovation for HE in this millennium and beyond is irrefutable.

Sharma (2008) provides an adapted list of recommendations from the ICT Capacity Building at USP Project (2005) on how ICTs can be integrated into the curriculum. They are as follows:

a) Develop and implement ICT policy in education.
b) Develop, review and implement ICT curricula at all levels in education.
c) Integrate ICT in the school curriculum.
d) Introduce ICT in the teacher education institutions so that all teachers are familiar with ICT pedagogy.
e) Develop ICT leadership at all levels in the education system.
f) Conduct ICT awareness programmes for teachers, students and the members of the school community.

4. Methodology

Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 183) consider methodology to be “The overall strategy for resolving the complete set of choices or options available to the inquirer. Far from being merely a matter of making selections among methods, methodology involves the researcher purposely from unconscious worldview to enactment of that worldview via the inquiry process”. Quality research usually results from the use of a mixture of methods to do it. Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold (1998) highlight that researchers ought not to only account for the most suitable methods for their research or problem, but ought to also determine the specific set of research methods that would engender an improved and profound understanding of it.

It is important to establish that the Case Study Approach has been used as the paradigm of this study.

Thomas (2011, p. 5) defines it this way:

“Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame - an object - within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates”.

Such an approach has been taken, since this study involves all relevant aspects of the course curriculum that could shed light on its efficacy or deficiency.

It is also said to be an “[…] empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin 1984, p. 23). Soy (1997) further elaborates that it “[…] excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research” (p. 1). It emphasises a thorough background examination of a restricted number of circumstances and their interactions.

For this case study, a Spanish translation course curriculum has been chosen. Carefully following the models of curriculum design and development, in conjunction with constructive alignment, the curriculum document is then analysed, with a view to pointing out those deficient areas and modifying them to embrace a more emancipator approach. Recommendations and suggestions are made to improve the course curriculum, followed by the design of a modern curriculum that supports quality learning and teaching.

5. Analysis/Review Of The SPA 4101 Course Curriculum

Below is a detailed review and analysis of the course curriculum.

A. Aim of the Course

This course is intended to introduce students to translation principles, methodology, theory and practice of general translations.

B. Course Description

The course structure/description is good, however it needs further improvement. It does not tell us about the level of the students nor of the course. It merely highlights what is to be covered, some of the subject matters to be considered and which native speaker (lecturer) will teach what part. A course description is supposed to give us a general layout of the course, what is expected from students, and so forth. This is an area that has to be addressed.
C. Alignment of Course Aim to Vision, Mission, and Graduate Attributes

The UG does not have any graduate attributes/outcomes in its Strategic Plan of 2009-2012. Upon consultations with course lecturers and senior administration, it was confirmed that, while some Faculties and Departments may have their specific graduate attributes/characteristics, the UG possessed none. In fact, some course lecturers did not even know what the term meant and asked for clarifications. Upon clarifying it for them, there was still abject silence on their part. The term seemed foreign to them. One of the lecturers reported that she had broached the subject with administration; however, the University’s administration never got around to actually defining these specific graduate attributes.

The aim of the SPA 4101 course is definitely not aligned to the mission of the University. The mission contains such verbs like ‘discover, generate, disseminate and apply [knowledge of the highest standard]’. The wording of the course aim does not allude to any applicability of knowledge gained. It merely speaks of introducing/initiating students to the subject matter in question. And in terms of it allowing for ‘free and critical inquiry’ – also stated in the mission – the course aim, once again, does not give precedence to ‘critical inquiry’.

In reference to the vision of the University, the course aim does reflect certain snippets of it. It does give credence to ‘reflects the needs and constraints of Guyana’ – as stated in the vision – since the subject matter, Spanish, and Spanish Translation specifically, is a very important one for the development of Guyana. Guyana is positioned in the continent of South America, where it is the only country, of thirteen (13) countries, whose official language is English. Nine (9) of the territories speak Spanish, one (1) speaks French, one (1) speaks Dutch, and one (1) speaks Portuguese. Many native Spanish speaks live in Guyana. Many of them are in the health field, especially. Guyana has bilateral ties with Latin America and, more often than not, translation skills are required to make communication easily accessible. Still, the course aim could be specified some more to truly reflect the University’s vision.

As mentioned earlier, the University does not have graduate attributes/outcomes, so it is difficult to ascertain whether this course’s aim is aligned to them or not. In essence, there is nothing in the course aim that suggests that students will be able to nurture creative, critical and complex cognitive skills. It does not reflect creativity, application and life-long learning which is suggested in both the vision and mission of the University.

D. The course ILOs (objectives)

a) To introduce students to the translation world
b) To provide students with basic techniques of translation
c) To introduce students to general translation practice
d) To enable students to carry out general translations at an acceptable level

E. The course LTAs

The course LTAs principally consist of a discussion of topics surrounding translation theory and practice, on a weekly basis, followed by translation exercises, to and from Spanish, with texts of a general nature. Even though the course curriculum does state that texts are of a ‘general nature’, texts used for translation purposes are not only general, but also of a specialised nature. These texts correspond to the areas of Tourism, Economics, Politics, Health, Environment, among others. It is important to note that the course is done 100% on an individual basis. At no time, throughout the course, is there an opportunity for students to engage in collaborative learning. Learning is linear and chronological.

F. The course ATs and Grading

The course ATs and Grading are varied. In terms of formative assessments, weekly in-class or take home translations are done, where students’ translation skills are placed under the microscope. Translations are done in both English and Spanish. The lecturer and students usually would publicly discuss and correct the translation, identifying and clarifying those sticky areas. This is done for the duration of the course, up to shortly before the start of the final examinations’ period.

With regard to summative assessments, just like the LTAs, they are done 100% on an individual basis. The summative assessment is divided into two parts: course work, totaling 50% of the marks and a final exam, totaling the remaining 50%.

a) Regarding the course work (50%), there are written tests and a seminar paper. There are three written tests, consisting of translations from English to Spanish. These are done at intervals throughout the semester and have a combined weighting of 15%.

For the Spanish to English translations, there are also three tests administered throughout the semester and have a combined worth of 20%. The weighting of the Spanish to English translation is greater, because the native language of the students is English; hence, a greater degree of difficulty and expectation is placed on students to render quality translations in their mother tongue. Students are allowed to use Spanish/English dictionaries, as this is a course requirement. For both of the translations tests (English/Spanish and Spanish/English), students are given 180 minutes (3 hours) to complete both of them (90 minutes per translation). Students may or may not be given options of various texts.
This is left to the discretion of the lecturer. In regard to the seminar paper, students are allowed to choose any area in translation theory and practice and present a written paper in no more than 20 pages. This is worth 15%.

b) Regarding the final exam (50%), students are given 180 minutes (3 hours) to complete two translation passages. They are given an additional two translation passages as options. It therefore means that 90 minutes are used to complete one translation, and the remaining 90 minutes to complete the other. Students are allowed to use Spanish/English dictionaries, as this is a course requirement. The passage to be translated from English to Spanish is 20% of the final exam mark, while the Spanish/English translation is the remaining 30% of the final exam mark. Similar to the coursework, the Spanish/English translation is awarded more marks, given that the students’ mother tongue is English. In other words, they are expected to do a near-perfect translation in their native tongue.

The UG has a grading system per course which determines how good a student might have done. Table 2 depicts this grading scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Category of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Pass with Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Pass with Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G. Alignment of LTAs and ATs to ILOs

There is a certain degree of alignment among the LTAs and ATs with ILOs. What I can say, without doubt, is that there is a good alignment between the LTAs and ATs. What is done in the LTAs is also done, with a greater degree of difficulty, in the ATs. For the LTAs, students are introduced to translation techniques which have to be applied in translation exercises throughout the duration of the course. For the ATs, they are expected to apply what they have learnt. Nonetheless, the alignment could be even closer, as there is still room for improvement. For a course of this nature, which is translation, the activities are quite good. Still, there could be a greater variety of activities, as everything is done to only promote independent learning. It is skills-based or performance-based in nature. Students have to master a set of skills, which is still very relevant for translation, as that is what it is seemingly all about. However, it is not only about mastering skills, but applying them for creativity, application and life-long learning.

In reference to Grading, this follows the norm-referenced assessment (NRA), objective and measurable assessment, where students are assessed analytically, following the curve, to obtain comparative scores and grades. It is not a true reflection of the students’ abilities simply because the evaluation tasks are limited to only emphasizing on a specific set of skills, and not necessarily reflecting on them.

Basically what is contained in the ILOs, the students are able to carry them out during the unfolding of the course LTAs and ATs. As to what depth they are able to do so is another matter altogether. The alignment between LTAs and ATs to ILOs can be markedly improved, as the verbs in the ILOs are lower-order thinking verbs (Biggs & Tang, 2011) which do not encourage deep learning. They only encourage the students to use low cognitive skills to complete the required tasks and activities.

Biggs & Tang (2011) affirm that “Using verbs to structure ILOs emphasise that learning and understanding come from student activity […]” (p. 131). It therefore follows that in teaching and learning, the learning outcomes must be priority.

Looking at the course objectives (ILOs), it is irrefutable that the existing ones need to be rewritten. As they are presently, they do not say much about what students are expected to do.

These have been written for the traditional times. These are teacher-centred objectives, as they are written from the teacher’s point of view. This is clearly seen. All of the verbs used – ‘introduce’ ‘provide’ ‘enable’ – still leave me wondering as to how these things will be executed. In other words, ‘Introduce’ how? ‘Provide’ how? ‘Enable’ how? The new ILOs ought to provide the answers, as they ought to be student-centred. These ought to be written from the students’ point of view.

The term ‘objectives’ is no longer relevant, as it is teacher-centred. It highlights what the teacher does. That kind of teaching is counterproductive in today’s society, due to student diversity and different learning abilities. The term ILOs, however, is student-centred. It addresses what students ought to know and do.

Shuell (1986) reminds us that “It is helpful to remember that what the student does is actually more important in determining what is learned, than what the teacher does” (p. 429). In other words, then, it is the teacher’s responsibility to properly prepare ILOs that are ‘specific,
measurable, achievable, realistic and time-framed’ (Maki, 2004).

H. Other Aspects of the Curriculum

Resources

The learning-teaching resources for this course are not many. Students are expected to have a good Spanish/English dictionary for translation. They are also supposed to have the required text, which has been published some twenty-five (25) years ago, Newmark’s (1988) A Textbook of Translation. This is the main text, from which the course content has been derived. There are three other optional texts published in 1977, 1980 and 1987. From time to time, depending on the discretion of the lecturer, relevant materials may be acquired from the newspapers, journals, magazines, and the like. Students may obtain information from elsewhere, for their ‘understanding’; however, that is not a prerequisite. The teacher may, depending on his discretion, obtain relevant information from online and pass same to students, or instruct them from where to get the information.

Course Content

The course content does not provide enough information on what is actually covered every week. All weekly LTAs are the same: ‘Translation practice into Spanish & into English’. Though the textbook is quite outdated, given that this is 2013, the course content is highly relevant to the specific purpose of translation and what it entails. It is in harmony with the students’ level of understanding. Each of the weekly topics alludes to an aspect of translation, as students are made aware of the fact that every document cannot be translated in the same way. They must be translated based on a number of elements: context, register, level of readers, and the like. Even though the content is some twenty-five years old, it transcends time, as translation currently embraces all of the topics covered. Translation is not to be done haphazardly, as it is a powerful means of communicating valuable information from one language to another. The meaning and natural style of the text must be conserved in both languages, lest serious problems be engendered from faulty or ‘unfaithful’ communications.

Values, Beliefs, and Ideologies

Even though the official language spoken in Guyana is English, there is an influx of Spanish speakers, entering Guyana, some of whom can barely speak English. This language is a part of Guyana’s social make-up and it is here to stay. Added to that, Guyana has a growing border dispute with Venezuela, a neighbouring Spanish-speaking nation, over the ownership of a section of the country close to the Venezuelan border. That has been an ongoing issue, for decades now. Quite recently, there was an “armed visit” by the Venezuelan Army, which is a breach of sovereignty towards Guyana. Most of the Guyanese population cannot speak Spanish, though they agree that they need to. While it is unquestionable, the role that Spanish is playing in Guyana, most people do not see it as necessary, though it very much is.

There are embassies of Cuba, Colombia, Chile, Venezuela, Argentina and Mexico in Guyana. When there are workshops to be done, translators have to be found, or brought it, to translate documents from one language to the other. And these are documents related to bilateral agreements to aid Guyana’s development.

Further to this, the Government of Cuba has established a Scholarship Programme with Guyana, where some 350+ students go to study medicine, engineering, economics, among others. The language of instruction is Spanish.

Learning And Teaching Approach

It is important to highlight that this Spanish course curriculum was developed, following the traditional approach to learning and teaching. It was designed to emphasise the Grammar-Translation Method. Following this method, language was conceived as a system of signs to convey ideas. Methods of teaching foreign languages (FLs) such as audio oral and audio-lingual rested in the formal teaching of grammar and translation. The goal of the study of a language is to learn a language to read its literature, or benefiting from the intellectual development which results from this study. This should be a detailed analysis of its grammatical rules, followed by the application of this knowledge to translate sentences and text in the foreign language and vice versa.

Reading and writing are the major focus of attention. Vocabulary selection is based on the reading texts used, and they are taught through bilingual lists of words, use of the dictionary, and memorisation. The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and practice of the language. A large part of class is dedicated to the translation of sentences. Precision is emphasised. It is expected that students achieve high standards in the quality of their translations. Grammar is taught deductively, i.e. through the presentation and study of the grammatical rules that are then practised with grammar exercises. The mother tongue of the student is the medium of instruction.

This kind of teaching is synonymous with the two of Smith’s (2000) curriculum approaches: curriculum as a body of knowledge and curriculum as product. In addition, Prevedel (2003), in her article, also makes specific mention to the traditional approach and what it entails.

Student Learning Diversity

This traditional approach to curriculum does not account for student learning diversity, and therefore embraces the
Level 1 Teaching discussed by Biggs and Tang (2011) which deals with ‘what the student is’. In other words, it was the teacher’s responsibility to teach and it was the students who were supposed understand what was taught to them, somehow. No consideration was given for students’ preferred learning styles. Their personal characteristics, ethnic background, emotional, social, intellectual, and state of bodily development, physical needs and health and material resources were not contemplated. It is similar to the ‘Susan’ and ‘Robert’ phenomenon, where Susan gets ahead, because of her abilities and where Robert is left behind because of ‘non-ability’ to perform.

6. Recommendations

One of the major recommendations is for the sociocultural presuppositions of the educational setting to be considered while designing the new course curriculum, since the course curriculum must also be a reflection of the society in which it is framed.

The following recommendations are given, in light of the analysed course curriculum:

A. Aim

The aims of the course should be aligned with the vision, mission, values and goals, graduate and programme outcomes of the University. Generally the aim of the course should be a subset of the graduate outcomes. The current aim does not reflect the UG’s graduate outcomes and should be re-written. It is more teacher-focused since it uses the word ‘introduce’. The verb still leaves one wondering, ‘Introduce how?’ The recommended aim is as follows:

Apply translation principles, methods and techniques to produce quality translated texts of a general and specialised nature in both Spanish and English.

B. Course Description

The description of the course should mention what level of Spanish language the students should already have, and what level will be taught in this course. The benefits rationale of enrolling in this course should also be mentioned, for example ‘Why is Spanish Translation important?’ The recommended course description appears in the newly constructed course curriculum (see Appendices).

C. ILOs

ILOs are statements, written from the students’ perspective, that indicate the level of understanding and performance. The different levels of understanding can be defined using the Structure of the Observed Learning Outcomes (SOLO) taxonomy which presents a staircase of verbs to be used. SOLO taxonomy is a systematic way of describing how students’ understanding grow in complexity from quantitative to qualitative (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The SOLO taxonomy activates a range of verbs from a low to a high cognitive level.

The existing ILOs do not focus on what the students will be able to do as a result of engaging in this course. The existing ILOs use words such as ‘introduce’, ‘provide’, and ‘enable’ which obviate the fact that it’s a teacher-directed learning. They leave one to wonder, ‘Introduce how?’ ‘Provide how?’ ‘Enable how?’ The ILOs should promote student-focused learning and emphasise functioning knowledge. Below are new ILOs that use higher order verbs from the SOLO taxonomy. This promotes deep learning and the LTAs and ATs will be easier to align. Below are some recommended ILOs:

a) Explain the role and relevance of translation in the 21st century

b) Examine the basic techniques and kinds of translation

c) Analyse current translation trends and techniques

d) Apply general and specialised techniques to translate general and specialised texts

e) Reflect critically on the use of general and specialised techniques

D. LTAs

With regards to LTAs, translation requires a very motivated class (Popovic, 2001). “Translation is also very time consuming and difficult but the teacher should be really good to manage the learning activities well” (Dagiliene 2012, p. 10). The material for translation should be interesting and related to the students’ knowledge. In fact, they should possess specialised dictionaries. Working in pairs and groups, in translation classes, motivates the students, and gives them a chance to critically evaluate and discuss, test and compare their work (Popovic, 2001). In translation, the students should know what they are writing and to whom it is addressed. The students should also become familiar with the correct word order of translation, since the order of words in a sentence can change the meaning. In translation, students should focus on identifying differences of the structure and vocabulary of the two languages (Koppe & Kremer, 2007). The subtopics in the current course curriculum can remain, however including specific subtopics as what is translated should be provided e.g. translation of specific words for a given text. Subtopics should be included for all topics, to show the difficult level as the course progresses. Some recommended LTAs, to keep students motivated, are given below:

a) Different student groups work on translating different sections of a text, and then collaborate to connect together the parts into a full text, as in a jigsaw task.
b) Students bring short texts or proverbs based on their own interests and present to the class, and then use them for translation.

c) Students work in groups to translate texts, then re-group and compare, and then finally compare with some already translated published material (case study), as in problem-based learning (PBL). Students can also do case studies individually.

d) Back-translation: one group translates, and the other group back-translates, and then they all compare the differences and critically discuss the errors.

e) Students do a project based translation e.g. translate a script of a movie scene, and dub it again with the new translated version.

f) Students do an individual presentation of translation of texts of their own professional fields.

g) Pair and group discussions of a text translation in areas of interest to the students. This involves all students in translations.

h) Correcting mistakes in ‘incorrect translations’, and discuss errors.

i) Students randomly pick articles from the internet and translate them. Students generally avoid what they can’t translate. This enhances their learning experience as this is a very challenging activity. This LTA ensures that students don’t avoid particular translations.

j) Translate a high level document (legal document) to a low level document (for general public).

k) Students can work with short and long texts in both languages, translate from various texts of different sources, employing translation techniques and working with electronic dictionaries.

l) Individual and collaborative activities can be done online to create diversity and to incorporate ICTs in translation.

m) For an online course, discussion boards (forums) can be integrated for discussions of essential topics within the course. Both facilitator and students will be able to post questions, comments and general information, creating threaded discussions.

E. ATs

Assessment is a key component of the learning experience. It is a measure of how well the ILOs are achieved. The current ATs do not give a detailed breakdown of what will be assessed. The ATs should reflect which ILOs are assessed. Also the grading criterion is not shown. A criterion-referenced assessment (CRA) pattern needs to be adopted, with a view to evaluating students holistically. ATs will be similar to those described in the section for LTAs (see above), and can also include the following:

A translation of an assigned text; a brief summary of the strategy/strategies used to translate the text, including the length of time it took to complete the translation; the edited (showing track changes) version of the translation; a parallel document used in translating the text (this can be a URL); a brief description of the target audience, and a proper invoice for the job.

Students can work together in revision mode. Each week’s partnership can be set up. The students can evaluate, revise and mark their partners’ translations and return them to their partners to accept or reject.

F. Grading

Standardization of UG’s Grading system. The grading criteria should be a direct reflection of the ILOs. Table 2 depicts the current UG’s grading system which has been conserved, as only the University administration can change that. A rubric for UG’s grading system, with reference to each course should be provided as a means of establishing the quality of the derived grade. In fact, such a rubric has been provided (see new course curriculum in Appendices) for this course.

H. Other Aspects of the Curriculum

Resources

Opportunities and spaces must be created in which both student and teacher will be able to exchange ideas and express concerns with each other, and with course colleagues. Consequently, communication can be effected by using of email, Skype, Gtalk, Google Hangout, and so on.

Current course readings should be provided for the students. A specific text should not be used. In some cases, students could be given a URL to access the readings while other readings can be provided as Microsoft Word or as PDF files.

Students ought to have monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, preferably Larousse, a good English-language style/usage guide, e.g., The Associated Press Stylebook, a good English-language thesaurus, such as Roget’s International, dictionaries of antonyms and synonyms, a comprehensive bilingual dictionary of Spanish false cognates, dictionaries for specialised subject areas, and so on.

Course Content

This course is intended to give a thorough overview of the field of translation in both the languages. Students will be exposed to the following:

a) Key translation resources – dictionaries, glossaries and parallel documents and online resources

b) Relevant and appropriate strategies for translation in both languages

c) The major theoretical, cultural and historical landmarks or aspects of the languages
d) The most prominent trends and debates in the field of translation

e) New translation technologies, including computer-assisted translation tools, terminology management tools, and so on.

f) A wide variety of documents from Spanish into English.
g) Texts related to the socio-cultural setting of Guyana and the University.

Values, Beliefs, and Ideologies
In relation to these, it is recommended that they be reflected in course content, and in LTAs that students would be required to do. This would only serve to heighten a continual awareness and appreciation for the psycho-socio-philosophical realities of society.

Learning and Teaching Approach
The learning and teaching approach must move away from a teacher-focused learning to student-centred learning. This could be achieved by incorporating the best aspects of each of the curriculum approaches outlined by Smith (2000) and Prevedel (2003). It is important to note, however, that the learner-driven/curriculum as process and critical/curriculum as praxis models should be the dominant models used to design the new course curriculum.

Student Learning Diversity
To encourage student learning diversity in this new course curriculum, it is recommended that consideration be given for students’ preferred learning styles. Their personal characteristics, ethnic background, emotional, social, intellectual, and state of body development, physical needs and health and material resources must be contemplated. In addition, the course curriculum needs to embrace principles emanating from the Universal Design for Learning [UDL] (National UDL Centre, 2012) which ensures that each student is catered for in the classroom.

In light of all of the recommendations, the final recommendation is to develop the course curriculum for an online course [web-enhanced / blended / fully online]. The UG has put plans in motion to introduce distance and flexible learning (DFL), hence the suitability of the newly developed course curriculum for such an environment. ICTs are now a necessity in learning and teaching. In addition, the newly course curriculum document must follow constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2011) as this will ensure that all students learn independently, collaboratively and autonomously.

7. Conclusion
The aim of this report has been to highlight those areas that are deficient in this course curriculum, analyse and revise them, and make recommendation for improvement. From the study conducted, the current curriculum at the UG is heavily teacher-centred – indicative of the traditional approach to curriculum planning and design – and even though students may be considered, the classroom session is directed by the ‘sage of the stage’ who gives out the ‘sagely’ knowledge, with the expectation that the students take it in like sponges. Owing to this, a more student-centred, emancipatory approach has been adopted which seems to empower students, giving them protagonism and autonomy of their learning experiences.

The study also reveals that even though there may be some alignment of LTAs and ATs to ILOs, the alignment needs to be even closer, hence the adoption of constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2011) which would cater for student learning diversity. Constructive alignment will ensure that each student is considered and that he is able to embrace a deep approach to learning.

The present study has also revealed that the F2F mode of instructional delivery is the prevailing mode at the UG and, in this age of ICT, it behooves this HE institution to move swiftly in the direction of online learning and teaching, to give students a more broad-based learning, using a repertoire of learning and teaching tools and resources, with a view to engendering significant educational experiences.

For this Spanish curriculum, and all other course curriculums at this institution of higher learning, it is advisable that the best features of each one of the curriculum development models be integrated in order to ensure learning effectiveness. Learning effectiveness is the key to high-quality education and, ultimately, the success of the educational institution. And given that the core business of any HE institution is learning and teaching, all energies must be channeled into ensuring that it meets everyone’s expectations.

This report can form part of the existing empirical evidence on curricular reforms, and its significance to improve student outcomes, and be used as a reference guide for future curriculum planning, design and development.

References


