

Chapter 11


Curriculum Design and Innovation: Higher Education Context

Favourate Y. Mpofu

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6309-1697>

National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe

Doris Chasokela

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5983-8508>

National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the importance of curriculum design and innovation within the context of higher education. This is critical because as higher education institutions strive to meet the changing demands of the globalized workforce and increasingly evolving technological landscape, innovative curriculum strategies are fundamental. The chapter emphasizes the need for adaptability and responsiveness to societal and labor market needs and expectations. It then highlights the key trends in curriculum design such as student-centered learning, integrated curriculum design and subject-focused curriculum. Additionally, the chapter discusses the challenges faced in designing and innovating curricula in the higher education context. Ultimately, incorporating stakeholder views is critical to fostering graduate employability, acquisition of 21st-century skills and navigating the complexities of the digital era.

INTRODUCTION

The higher education (HE) sector is greatly evolving in response to digital transformation, technological advancements, globalization, the dynamic workforce needs as well as the shift to online learning and blended learning accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The evolution of the HE contexts is reshaping the educational needs and demands of the job market, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are increasingly demanded to adapt their careers to meet the changing needs and remain relevant. Curriculum design plays a critical role in equipping students with the complexities of modern societies and the ever-changing business world. This chapter will discuss the role of curriculum design and innovation

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in higher education highlighting the key trends in curriculum design, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the importance of adaptability in curriculum design in higher education, including the need to align curriculum with institutional goals, stakeholder needs (e.g industry and civic society), and student learning outcomes. This chapter highlights best practices and emerging trends in curriculum design. The objectives of the chapter include: exploring the importance of curriculum design and innovation in HE, examining the challenges faced by HEIs in effective curriculum design, and identifying key strategies for developing innovative and effective curricula.

The Role of Curriculum Design in HE Context

Curriculum design is a critical component of HE. It serves as a blueprint to guide pedagogical choices, student learning experiences, and outcomes. Kumar and Rewari (2022:423) posit that

“A curriculum is a collection of knowledge that is translated by following the administrative and academic standards and regulations, textbooks, instruction methodologies, and the practice of teaching-learning in classrooms. It can contribute a lot to the development and change in society as well as to individuals. However, the designing and development of the curriculum is a complex process, which needs meticulous planning as several aspects of teaching-learning need to be considered”.

In the current context of digital transformation in HE, globalization, and rapid technological advancements that have also altered the requirements of the job market, an effective curriculum is more fundamental than ever before. Hussin (2018) argues that the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0) is founded on the use of technologies such as robotics, the Internet of Things, data analytics, machine learning, and artificial intelligence (AI). These disruptive technologies have generated the increasing need for Education 4.0, transforming the education sector, and creating new dimensions of teaching and learning. It is imperative and is shaping not only the educational experiences of students but also impacts the wider objectives of HEIs, which aim to produce employable graduates who are adaptable and possess critical thinking as well as problem-solving skills.

Curriculum design involves the systematic planning and organization of the organization's content, pedagogical approaches, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. The objective of curriculum design is to ensure educational experiences that are relevant, coherent, up-to-date, and aligned with the needs of learners and the goals of educational institutions. An appropriately designed curriculum entails effective engagement, adaptability, and critical thinking and equips students to navigate the complexities of contemporary labor markets. Curriculum design focuses on different aspects as presented in Figure 1.

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