# Course Improvement Evaluation: A Framework Towards Redefining Curriculum

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## Abstract

This study is an evaluation research on course improvement evaluation as a framework for curriculum development. It sought to investigate how else the instructor and the course as evaluand performed the test of effectiveness in one foundational course under Master of Arts in Education program. This study utilized evaluation research design, a social science activity directed at collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and communicating information about the workings and effectiveness of social programs. There were 25 graduate students taken as participants. A researcher-made evaluation instrument was utilized as a tool for gathering the data. The quantitative data in evaluation responses were analyzed using weighted mean and the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that the teacher and her teaching itself, in general, was effective, in the areas of (1) curriculum objectives, (2) contents, (3) teaching strategies, (4) assessment tools and methods, (5) course requirements, (6) resources, and (7) use of multimedia served the purpose in learning. Most significantly, the findings provide a research-based guide for intelligent decision-making and action regarding what and how to enhance key areas of teaching.

**Keywords**— course improvement evaluation, evaluation, redefining curriculum.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Course improvement evaluation is an essential measure primarily endeavored to yield tangible results on the effectiveness of the conduct of teaching and instruction Concomitantly, its results draw a clear picture of the aspects where improvement is apparently needed.

In an unprecedented practice of curriculum development in the country, the curriculum per se is a ready reference and made available for implementation from a conceived and hierarchical authority. Insofar as observed, evaluation research or the test for effectiveness is found wanting. Evaluation or course evaluation is the least taken step, a thing unlikely to be sought after as a means for redefining curriculum.

Course improvement evaluation is one essential step in redefining the curriculum. This study posed a framework towards redefining curriculum, viewing it as a continuous and cyclical process, focused on the course evaluation, its theory, practice, and lessons learned as basis and inputs for curriculum revision.
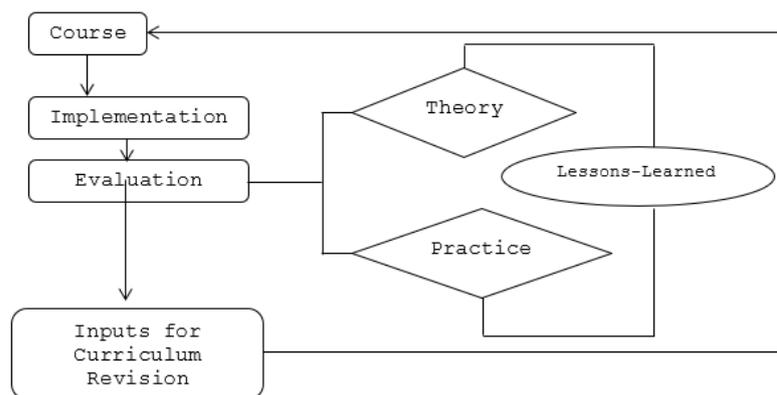
Figure 1.  Framework for redefining curriculum

This paper, however, endeavored the conduct of course improvement evaluation and sought to answer the following research evaluation questions, i.e., (1) what focus does course improvement evaluation perceive to have? (2) what is the level of effectiveness of the evaluand? and (3) how else the results of course improvement evaluation be utilized? Specifically, this evaluation ascertained the level of effectiveness of the variables under study, including, (1) objectives, (2)content, (3)teaching strategies, (4)course requirements, (5) assessment tools and methods, (6) course requirements(7) use of multimedia, (8) instructor. These parameters or indicators are posited as vital components of teaching and instruction in a particular course under a curriculum.

## 2.   Literature Review

According to Lee J. Cronbach (2000), the foremost exponential proponent of Course Improvement through Evaluation, three types of decisions for which evaluation is used: (1) course improvement, that is deciding what instructional materials and methods are satisfactory and where change is needed; (2) decisions about individuals, that is identifying the needs of the pupil for the sake of planning instruction, judging pupil merit for purposes of selection and grouping, acquainting the pupil with his own progress and deficiencies, and (3) administrative regulation, that is judging how

good the school system is, how good individual teachers are, etc.

In some cases, the evaluation had been done as part of systemic routines, yet at some point, the results are not being used maximally and purposefully to improve the course itself, or the curriculum as a whole.   Be that as it may, the curriculum is presumably made better for greater functionality, only if and when course evaluation is taken, alongside with curriculum quality audit and review. Evaluation is a fundamental part of curriculum development, not an appendage (Madaus, 2012). Central to course evaluation is to ascertain what changes a course produces and should identify aspects of the course that need revision (Cronbach, 2000). At one hand, course evaluation is an academic endeavor every teacher may consider undertaking to revisit the theory and practice of the course, and from hence draw out the lessons-learned and map out a necessary improvement of the course.

Carbone et al (2015) cited a review on empirical studies in course evaluation highlighted that (1) learning environment a stronger predictor of learning outcomes, (2) student learning is found to be 'unambiguously linked to effective teaching' , and (3) that the factors that contribute to effective teaching include the instructor's ability to establish rapport with students, interpersonal accessibility, feedback to students, active learning strategies, opportunities for students to interact with their peers, as well as a curricular  experience in which students are required to integrate learning from separate

courses around a central theme'. They further affirmed that these findings suggest that there is a role for teaching in learning, that good teaching is worth investing in, and that students may rate good teaching highly in course evaluations. As such, they viewed that student evaluations of courses provide an at least intuitive indication of students' learning experiences.

## 3. Methodology

This is a research evaluation on course improvement evaluation: a framework towards curriculum development utilized. The study utilized evaluation research design, a social science activity directed at collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and communicating information about the workings and

effectiveness of social programs (Rossi et al., 2014). This ascertained the level of effectiveness of the variables under study. Primarily, this study included 25 graduate students as participants in the University where the researcher taught. A researcher-made evaluation instrument was utilized as a tool for gathering the data. The quantitative data in evaluation responses is analyzed using weighted mean and the qualitative data is analyzed using thematic analysis.

This study is a course improvement evaluation to one course in Master of Arts in Education, i.e. Educ 203 Curriculum Principles, Design and Evaluation to about twenty-five (25) graduate student-participants using purposive sampling.

Table 1. Participants Gender and Curricular Program

| Gender | Number of Participants per Program | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *MS Math Educ | *MAED EM | *MAED ELT | *MAED G&C |
| Male | 5 | 2 | | 1 |
| Female | 1 | 10 | 3 | 3 |
| Total        25 | | | | |

The evaluation instrument includes eight (8) items as variables under evaluation for the level of effectiveness, namely (1) objectives, (2)content, (3)teaching strategies, (4)course requirements, (5) assessment tools and methods, (6) resources (7) use of multimedia, (8) instructor. Alongside is a rating scale, ranging from 1 as less effective to 5 as most or highly effective. Each item component has corresponding space provided for qualitative responses and explanation of the rating.

The evaluation instrument used was subjected to face, content, and construct validity by three (3) experts before final administration to the participants. In the questionnaire, the students rate the indicators for course evaluation and are asked to explain the meaning or give a description of the rating for each indicator. The level of effectiveness of the course under evaluation generates the qualitative data presented in Table 2 using the corresponding scale.

| Mean Ranges | Scale | Verbal Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1.00-1.49 | 1 | Nothing |
| 1.50-2.49 | 2 | Not Effective |
| 2.50-3.49 | 3 | Less Effective |
| 3.50-4.49 | 4 | Effective |
| 4.50-5.00 | 5 | Highly Effective |

The quantitative data on the level of effectiveness of the variables herein set forth under course evaluation is analyzed using weighted mean and the qualitative data is analyzed using thematic analysis. The latter data

served as triangulated data to the former, giving meaning and description. The generated result may be used as baseline information for course improvement and for the framework for curriculum development.

## 4. Results and Discussions

On the Level of Effectiveness of the Course under Evaluation

Taking the conduct of course improvement evaluation as the test of the effectiveness of the teacher and the teaching itself, in particular, how else the (1) objectives, (2) contents, (3) teaching strategies,(4) assessment tools and methods,(5) course requirements, (6) resources, and (7) use of multimedia served the purpose in learning. Most importantly, the results suggest a reference for intelligence as to what and how to improve these aspects in teaching.

Table 2. Level of effectiveness of the course under evaluation

| Indicators | Mean | Verbal Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Instructor | 4.88 | Highly Effective |
| 2. Contents | 4.68 | Highly Effective |
| 3. Course Requirements | 4.68 | Highly Effective |
| 4. Objectives | 4.56 | Highly Effective |
| 5. Teaching Strategies | 4.48 | Effective |
| 6. Resources | 4.32 | Effective |
| 7. Use of Multimedia | 4.20 | Effective |
| 8. Assessment Tools and Methods | 4.00 | Effective |
| **Overall Weighted Mean** | **4.47** | **Effective** |

Relatively, some indicators are marked highly effective like instructor, contents, course requirements, and objectives. Ratings considerably have the following meaning and describe themes as follow:

Instructor is
- ❖ Competent, knowledgeable (or rich knowledge evident because she can give discussion/able to elaborate topic, her art of questioning develop student's critical thinking and good understanding)
- ❖ Unquestionable expertise, professional, considerate, patient, approachable
- ❖ I learned a lot from her and her shared experiences …she has efficacy to enlist students' participation

Contents are
- ❖ Useful (in profession or work, enlightenment on how curriculum works) relevant, appropriate,
- ❖ Aligned to objectives

Course Requirements
- ❖ Doable (gives me time to reflect on my learning for that day),
- ❖ Quite challenging, it has intellectual appeal, great requirement for better understanding, can enhance intellectual capacity, good and reflective for critical thinking
- ❖ Helpful, useful

Objectives are…
- ❖ Comprehensive, specific, clear, valid, attainable and time bounded
- ❖ Broadness of the topic hinder attainment of the objectives
- ❖ Timeframe/ time allotment is hard for objectives to attain
- ❖ Met and delivered

At one hand, some indicators have the corresponding weighted mean, all mark as effective, i.e. the teaching strategies 4.48, the resources with 4.32, the use of multimedia with

4.20 and the assessment tools and methods 4.00. Worth the consideration so far, how else these indicators may help to improve the course, the following themes emerge as:

Teaching Strategies are
- ❖ Varied and appropriate, understandable,
- ❖ Interaction (through sharing of experiences, elaboration, and support from the instructor) makes discussion meaningful and inspiring
- ❖ Some topics are bit difficult due to its complexity - lacks depth
- ❖ Wrap-up discussion helped a lot

Resources
- ❖ Syllabus is provided, books as references are limited and inadequate, internet sources are vague and confusing

Use of Multimedia
- ❖ Available, helpful, functional

Assessment Tools and Methods
- ❖ Doable, relevant, writing reflection is punishing yet doable and relevant
- ❖ Reflection papers forced me to write, and I am learning a lot

Although the level of effectiveness of indicators used yielded favorable result as it shows that the course under evaluation generally is effective. Specifically, it is noteworthy that some indicators are highly effective, like the instructor, contents, course requirements, and objectives and relatively effective are the indicators like teaching strategies, resources, use of multimedia and assessment tools and methods. The former indicators may imply to be fixed and permanent at the outset of the course implementation, perhaps with no or little modifications during the whole duration - as cited with reference to the syllabus provided for the class. On a regular basis, during the semester, it usually starts with course orientation with the syllabus as the ready reference. Basically, the objectives, the contents, the course requirements, along with the instructor handling the course - a total package for the course. Often, students' impressions and understanding of what the course is and how it goes about are permanently locked in as to what are included in the objectives, the contents, and the course

requirements, including the qualities of the instructor.

On the other hand, the latter indicators, like the teaching strategies, the resources, the use of multimedia and the assessment tools and methods though these are set and reflected in the syllabus but may likely change and may be modified as the need arises. The need may include circumstances like students negotiating for some modifications for strategies when doing reporting, when choosing resources and multimedia to use. Students may even negotiate as to how they will be graded upon, or what assessment tools and methods are most favored by the majority considering their needs, nature and circumstance like their time and available resources, including financial and moral support. Be that as it may, the instructor being an expert employing his/her professional judgment decides for things that are negotiable and non-negotiable, but not compromising the quality of performance and expected outputs of the course. Being in the higher education, the instructor may freely exercise academic freedom, so to speak, and this may include his/her openness for negotiation and considerations for teaching and

learning. Further, in adherence to andragogy or adult learning principles where adult learners like the participants themselves are self-directed learners and that they take charge of their own learning, and they find the most relevance from task-oriented learning that aligns with their own realities.

## 5. Conclusion

Course improvement evaluation is one essential step in redefining the curriculum. This study posed a framework for curriculum development, viewing it as a continuous and cyclical process, focused on the course evaluation, its theory, practice, and lessons learned as basis and inputs for curriculum revision. The subject considered as evaluand, or the ones subjected for evaluation offered insights on the level of effectiveness along the areas evaluated. The results are made basis for improvement of the course itself.

## REFFERENCE

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