

A Model for Developing Curriculum Standards for Preschool Teacher Education

Greg Tabios Pawilen
University of the Philippines Diliman

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a model for developing curriculum standards for preschool teacher education especially for preschool teachers who will serve in different local communities in the Philippines. Different models of curriculum development were analyzed to come up with the proposed model for developing curriculum standards. The process of curriculum development in a teacher education institution for preschool education was also analyzed to understand how teacher education institutions develop curriculum and what curriculum sources and influences are considered when they develop curriculum. Curriculum experts in the Philippines and abroad were invited to give professional comments and to validate the model. The model for developing curriculum standards identified various curriculum sources and influences, and presents a logical, sequential, and dynamic procedure for developing curriculum.

Keywords: *curriculum development, standards, model, teacher education, preschool*

Since 1949 when Ralph Tyler wrote about the first model of curriculum development, many curriculum workers (Taba, 1962; Wheeler, 1967; Walker, 1972; Skilbeck, 1976; Nicholls & Nicholls, 1978; Print, 1993; Oliva, 2005) have presented different views and models on how the curriculum should be developed. These models prescribe certain processes that are linear, cyclical, or dynamic in nature. These models also reflect the context in which they are intended to be used (Print, 1993).

This study aims to contribute to the growing literature on Curriculum Studies, specifically by creating a model for developing curriculum standards for teacher education of preschool teachers who will be assigned to local communities. There are two primary reasons for conducting this study.

First, there is a need to create a model for developing curriculum standards that reflects the educational culture and environment of teacher education in the Philippines. In 2005, the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) proposed a National Competency Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) to assure teaching effectiveness and teacher development in the Philippines. However, there was no presentation of the curriculum development model that was used. It was not clear how different curriculum sources were addressed and considered, and how Teacher Education Institutions and other stakeholders were involved. A good curriculum development model should reflect the various sources of the curriculum (Tyler, 1949) and the different influences affecting curriculum processes (Stark and Lattuca, 1997).

In the Philippines, centralized planning of the curriculum has always been practiced. This allows individual interests to influence the development of the curriculum, which, consequently,

becomes one of the causes of many educational problems in the country. Hence, if curriculum standards are to be developed, the model for developing standards should be research-based. Doll (1992) describes curriculum development as a decision-making process that involves different curriculum workers making curricular decisions based on research. This helps in making effective curricular decisions. Wulf and Schave (1984) also underscore the importance of group interaction and participation in the creation of a successful curriculum design. Thus, there is a need for a model that shows how various curriculum workers and stakeholders are involved in various phases of curriculum development. This is helpful in developing a model that will facilitate the development of standards for preschool pre-service teacher education curriculum.

Second, this study addresses the need to develop curriculum standards for *preschool* pre-service teacher education especially those who will teach in local communities. The NCBTS is designed for all types of pre-service teacher education programs. However, there are no standards specifically designed for pre-service preschool teachers. The researcher believes that the nature of learners and the unique design of teaching and learning in preschool require a separate set of standards for pre-service preschool teachers. There is a need to rethink the one-size-fits-all approach being practiced by educational institutions in the Philippines. To develop a curriculum that is more relevant and responsive to the needs of the different learners, there is a need to develop a good model for developing curriculum standards.

The model proposed in this study will be helpful to teacher education institutions and to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in developing

and improving the pre-service teacher education curriculum in the country. The model will help in developing a curriculum that will improve the training and education of preschool teachers who will implement the Kindergarten Curriculum Standards of K-12, especially those who will serve in local communities.

RESEARCH AIMS

This study focused on the development of a model for developing curriculum standards for pre-service teacher education curriculum that are relevant and responsive to the needs of pre-school institutions located in different local communities in the Philippines. Specifically, the study answered the following questions:

1. What model can be used for developing curriculum standards for pre-school pre-service teacher education?
2. What curriculum sources and influences should be considered in developing standards for pre-school teacher education curriculum?

METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive research that utilized vast amounts of qualitative data from document analysis, participant observation, and focus group discussion. The study involved two major phases of research. The first phase focused on the development of a model for developing curriculum standards for pre-school teacher education. The second phase focused on the identification of curriculum sources and influences.

Research Participants

The research included students, college faculty members, pre-school teachers, administrators, and curriculum experts. The sample size for each group is given below.

1. Fifteen (15) female College Faculty, whose ages ranged from 35 to 65, and who had more than 10 years of teaching experience in various pre-school education subjects;
2. Thirty (30) female Preschool teachers, whose ages ranged from 30 to 65, who were assigned in different local communities in Luzon Area, and who had more than 10 years of teaching experience;
3. Ten (10) College Administrators
4. Eight (8) experts in curriculum studies who are based in the Philippines and in other countries; and
5. Five (5) preschool education experts who have knowledge and experience in developing curriculum, especially those who are involved in teacher education and research. These experts are occupying positions in various professional organizations, research agencies, and universities abroad.

Research Instruments

1. Checklist for Validating the Model – A checklist that contains criteria for validating the model was distributed to the curriculum experts.
2. Questionnaire – The questionnaire was prepared to guide the participants during the Focused Group Discussion. The questionnaire was used to gather information about the curriculum sources and influences that the school considered in developing the curriculum and the process they followed when they developed or designed curriculum in their school.

Research Venue

To apply the model, the study was conducted at Harris Memorial College. The school is recognized by the National Historical Institute (NHI) as the pioneer of kindergarten education in the Philippines. The College is also the first teacher education institution that offered pre-service teacher education for pre-school teachers in the country. The school is now on its one hundred and tenth year.

This school was chosen as the venue for this research because 90% of its graduates are assigned to teach in church-based kindergarten in local communities. Since 1906, the alumni were able to establish hundreds of local kindergarten schools in the Philippines. Since one of the goals of this study was to develop standards for the pre-service teacher education curriculum for pre-school teachers who will teach in local and indigenous communities, Harris Memorial College was considered the perfect venue for the study.

The study was also conducted in 30 selected local kindergarten schools located in different parts of Luzon. These schools cater to the educational needs of children from local and indigenous communities in the Philippines.

Data Gathering Procedures

1. Review of different curriculum development models

Various curriculum development models (Tyler, 1949; Diamond, 1998; Wiggins & McTighe, 2002; Stark, Lowther, Bentley, Ryan, et.al, 1990; Glatthorn, 1998; Nicholls & Nicholls, 1978; Wheeler, 1967; Walker, 1979) were analyzed based on their strengths and weaknesses. The possibility of using them in developing curriculum standards for preschool teacher education was also explored. This

type of review of different curriculum development models is modeled on the work of Murray Print (1993). The models are selected from original works of curriculum scholars published in curriculum reference books. These models are examples of linear, cyclical, and dynamic models. This procedure is important in selecting a model for developing curriculum standards. The result of the analysis of various models was used to develop a model for developing curriculum standards, which is one of the goals of this study.

2. Validation of the model by curriculum experts.

Six curriculum experts and five experts in preschool education were invited to examine the proposed model. This was important in modifying and improving the model before it was used. The comments from experts were used to modify, revised and improve the proposed model.

3. Analyzing Curriculum Sources and Influences

Following the model, a situational analysis through participant observation, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with school administrators, faculty members and 30 local preschool teachers, and document analysis were done to gather enough data on various curriculum sources and influences that are considered in the College-wide curriculum development activities. The participant observation method was done to identify the different curriculum sources and curriculum influences that were considered in the development of tertiary education curriculum especially for teacher education in the Philippines. The researcher participated and observed in the College for more than one semester to gather enough information on what curriculum sources and influences were

considered in college-wide curriculum development activities.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed as follows:

1. The curriculum development models were analyzed using *Reflective Eclecticism* as a method of curriculum study. This method was developed by George Posner (1995) to study various alternatives in making curriculum decisions. *Reflective eclecticism* is based on three assumptions: (1) different situations require different practices; (2) there are a myriad of curriculum alternatives; (3) it is important to understand the dilemmas that underlie each curriculum decision and to unpack the tacit assumptions behind each alternative (Posner (1995). This method can also be seen in the work of Print (1993) in analyzing various models and proposing his own model. This method allows researchers and curriculum scholars to develop new ideas or theories on various areas in curriculum studies by reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of various curriculum models and alternatives. In this study, the strengths and weaknesses of the various existing curriculum development models were analyzed, compared, and selected based on the following criteria:

- **Validity.** The model should be based on existing curriculum studies and theories. It should specify the different curriculum sources and influences and how they were utilized in the process of curriculum development.
- **Utility.** The model can be used in any context, whether in national curriculum development or in school-based curriculum development. It includes processes or procedures that are clear and easy to follow.

- **Relevance.** The model should be applicable to Philippine context of tertiary education specifically in teacher education. It should reflect how curriculum workers develop tertiary education curriculum.

2. The comments from curriculum experts and the results of the FGD with local school teachers, faculty members, and administrators were reported qualitatively. The results were used to modify the proposed model for developing curriculum standards.

3. Observation notes were analyzed qualitatively. The results were summarized in order to determine the various curriculum sources and influences that affect or influence curriculum development process especially in the college involved in the study. The identified curriculum sources and influences were clustered into three categories based on the model of Stark and Latucca (1997): internal, external, and organizational influences.

RESULTS

Results of the study are presented below in terms of the answers to the research questions.

1. What model can be used for developing curriculum standards for pre-school pre-service teacher education?

The review of various curriculum development models provides valuable insights and ideas on the development of a model for developing curriculum standards for preschool teacher education. All the curriculum development models are based on curriculum researches and are on certain theories of curriculum. Each model is unique depending on the curriculum theory advocated by the proponents. Thus it is the role of the

curriculum developers to select a model based on their context (Print, 1993).

In creating a model for developing curriculum standards for pre-service preschool teacher education, several practices, ideas, and procedures were adopted. The sequential or step-by-step process of the model is adopted from the ideas of the linear models that were analyzed. In phase 3, which involves development of curriculum standards, the linear concept of curriculum development was adopted from the model of Glatthorn (1998). This will help novice curriculum workers to understand the process of developing curriculum standards as part of the entire process of curriculum development.

The strengths of the cyclical models that were analyzed were also used, so that after the evaluation, curriculum workers may proceed again with situational analysis in order to respond to the different needs and problems encountered in curriculum development.

The dynamic view of curriculum development was also very useful in this study. In all the processes involved in the proposed model for developing standards, the nature of curriculum development in higher education is considered. In higher education, as faculty members plan or design their curriculum, they always consider the different curriculum sources and influences to ensure that their curriculum is relevant and up-to-date. The idea of Walker's (1979) platform and design is incorporated in the *situational analysis* since the participants in curriculum development and the faculty members who are involved in the implementation of the curriculum are considered as one of the *influences*.

The review of various curriculum development models provides valuable insights and ideas on the development of a model for developing curriculum standards for preschool teacher education. The final model shown in Figure 1 shows that the development of curriculum

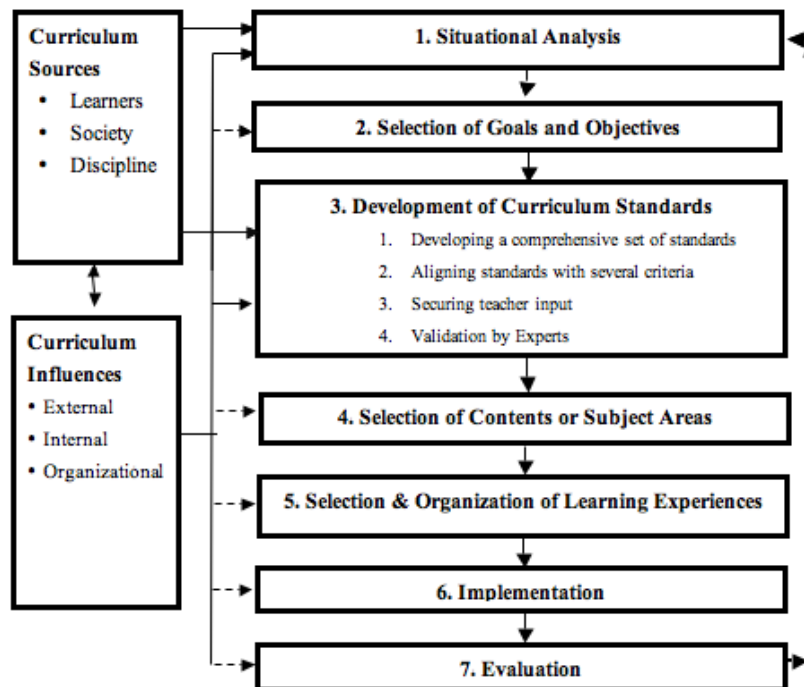


Figure 1: A Model for Developing Curriculum Standards

standards cannot be separated from the entire process of curriculum development. The numbers in each box represents the different sequence or phases to follow in curriculum development.

Two experts from the Philippines suggested the model should reflect the fact that various curriculum influences and sources are not only considered in the situational analysis phase but that these are also influential in all the succeeding phases of curriculum development. Putting a dotted arrow in between curriculum sources and influence and other succeeding phases will be useful for this purpose.

One expert from Japan suggested that a brief discussion of the various curriculum sources and influences can be provided in order to make the model easier to understand by curriculum workers. This expert also suggested that process number 3, which is selection of contents, should be changed into "selection of contents or subject areas" to distinguish content from curriculum standards since these two are related. Considering the comments and suggestions of the curriculum experts, the model was revised and improved.

In the context of this study, curriculum sources are general factors that influence or affect curriculum development and decision-making in the macro level. The model shows three curriculum sources identified by the research participants: *learners, society* and *discipline*. These three sources are also identified by Ralph Tyler (1949) in his model as important sources of curriculum. Figure 1 shows the curriculum sources considered to be very important in conducting situational analysis. Curriculum sources are used in determining the goals and objectives of the curriculum. These curriculum sources

are also useful in making decisions on the development of curriculum standards.

The curriculum influences are specific factors that affect the development of the curriculum and decision-making in the school or college level. The idea of curriculum influences was adopted from the model of Stark and Lattuca (1997). Accordingly, these curriculum influences can be grouped into three: external, internal, and organizational. In the model, the various curriculum influences are also important in developing curriculum standards. That is why there is an arrow connecting the curriculum influences and the development of curriculum standards. The model also recognizes the fact that in all phases of curriculum development, these curriculum influences are always considered. This is shown by the broken arrows connecting the curriculum influences with the different phases of curriculum development. This makes the model dynamic. It always considers the changing nature, needs and demands of its context.

Processes for Developing Curriculum Standards

1. Situational Analysis – the first phase of the model starts with analyzing the context in which the curriculum is developed. The situational analysis includes a study of the different curriculum sources (*students, society, and disciplines or subject matter*), and careful examination of the different curriculum influences (*internal, external, and organizational*) that affect curriculum development.
2. Selection of Goals and Objectives – the result of situational analysis will lead to the development of goals and objectives of the curriculum. In some cases, if the curriculum goals and objectives are already prescribed by the government or the university, these will be considered as part of the

internal or external influences that will be studied in the situational analysis.

3. Development of Curriculum Standards – after the situational analysis and selection of goals and objectives, curriculum standards will be developed. In this phase the first phase of Glatthorn's Model (1998) was modified to simplify the task for developing curriculum standards: (1) develop a comprehensive set of content standards by examining various curriculum sources and influences; (2) align the standards to several criteria; (3) secure teacher input to revise and improve the standards; (4) have the experts validate the standards; and (5) develop final draft of standards, divided into content standards, skills standards and values standards.
4. Selection of Content or Subject Areas – in this phase, the curriculum standards are used to develop or select subjects or courses that should be included in the curriculum.
5. Selection and Organization of Learning Experiences – this phase includes selection of learning activities, organizing instructional plans, and selection of instructional materials that will be used in implementing the curriculum.
6. Implementation – this involves the actual implementation of the curriculum by faculty members. It is where the actual teaching and learning take place.
7. Evaluation – in this final phase, the goals and objectives of the curriculum including the design and selection of all the curriculum elements are evaluated. After the result of evaluation, curriculum development process will go back to situational analysis.

Comments from Curriculum Experts

The proposed model for developing curriculum standards was presented to several experts in curriculum development. The experts were asked to give comments on the procedure presented on the model. The result of the validation shows that the eight curriculum experts agreed that the proposed model was able to:

- Show a clear and logical process of developing curriculum;
- Reflect the various curriculum sources and influences that affect curriculum development;
- Reflect a procedure that is based on curriculum theory (linear, cyclical, or dynamic);
- Reflect how curriculum workers plan and develop curriculum in any level;
- Specify areas where curriculum decisions are made;
- Reflect the major phases of curriculum development (Planning, design, implementation, and evaluation); and
- Include processes or procedures that are clear and easy to follow

The result of the validation of the curriculum experts also show that the model can be used in any context, whether in national curriculum development or in school-based curriculum development.

2. What curriculum sources and influences should be considered in developing standards for pre-school teacher education curriculum?

The researcher observed and analyzed how faculty members planned for and developed their own curriculum in the College. This process is important in

understanding the different curriculum sources and influences that are considered by the College in developing curriculum, particularly for preschool teacher education.

The results show three levels of curriculum planning and development followed by the College: (1) the Commission on Higher Education prescribes the official curriculum; (2) The college academic council led by the College Dean plans for the implemented curriculum; and (3) Each faculty member plans and develops the syllabi for all the courses. In all these levels, various curriculum sources and influences play an important role in developing, designing, and in implementing the curriculum.

Society as a Source of Curriculum

According to the College faculty members, since they are producing preschool teachers who will serve people coming from the rural and urban areas, it is imperative to examine the needs of these two types of communities. The graduates need to understand the culture and the socio-economic and political conditions of the people. This contextual knowledge can be learned from the General Education courses. Understanding the context is important in developing a relevant and responsive curriculum (Tyler, 1949; Nicholls & Nicholls, 1978). It is useful in selecting the curriculum goals and objectives, content, learning experiences, and it is also useful in designing assessment and evaluation tools (Taba, 1962; Stark & Lattuca, 1997; Oliva, 2005).

The results of the discussion showed that students are required to do multiple tasks when they are assigned to local communities when they graduate. They do not just teach in school; they also serve as the administrators of the school. In some instances, they serve as pioneers of

kindergarten education in the communities where they are assigned. Since they finished a degree in Kindergarten Education, the local folks and community officials consider them as experts in the field of teaching young children, so the teachers are consulted most of the time on various community programs related to the education of young children.

Learners as Source of Curriculum

All the faculty members and administrators also recognized the learners as one of the major sources of the curriculum. Although the curriculum content is set by CHED, they tried to align the curriculum to the needs and nature of the students. This process is done when the faculty members plan their individual syllabi as an interpretation of the intended curriculum set by CHED.

The students come from different provinces. They have different cultures, languages, learning styles, needs, and types and levels of motivation. The students are also different in terms of socio-economic status and different educational backgrounds (public or private). Recognizing the students as one major source of curriculum is supported by several curriculum scholars and is well-represented in their curriculum development models (*see* Taba, 1962; Wheeler, 1967; Walker, 1972; Skilbeck, 1976; Nicholls, 1978; Print, 1993; Stark & Lattuca, 1997; Oliva, 2005).

Discipline as Source of Curriculum

The third curriculum source is the discipline of education, particularly early childhood education. According to all the respondents, several curricular innovations and changes set by the government were considered and strictly followed in designing the official curriculum. Based on the CHED

Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 30 Series of 2004, the pre-service teacher education program for preschool teachers is part of the BEED curriculum. It is structured to meet the needs of professional teachers for elementary schools and special education programs in the Philippines (CMO No.30 S. 2004). Harris is one of the few remaining colleges offering a bachelor's degree in Kindergarten Education in the country.

Understanding the nature of the discipline is important in curriculum development (Tyler, 1949). The nature of teacher education as a discipline is stated in the memorandum of CHED. CMO 30 states that:

Teacher education is an applied discipline which draws from many of the basic disciplines in the social sciences (Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Political Science, Applied Linguistics, History, etc.), the Science Technology fields (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Engineering, Information Technology etc.), and the Humanities and related fields (Languages, Literature, Philosophy, Journalism, etc.).

Based on CMO 30, the BEED program aims to:

Develop elementary school teachers who are either (a) generalists who can teach across the different learning areas in grade school, (b) special education teachers, or (c) preschool teachers.

Looking at the nature of young preschool children, there is a need to provide a separate program for early childhood education in the Philippines. This type of program will help in addressing the educational needs of young children in accordance with the Education for All (EFA) goals of the Philippines.

Regarding the implemented curriculum, the respondents explained

that researches and developments in the discipline are also included in the syllabi of faculty members. The college officials believe that all faculty members should be updated with the current trends, theories and innovations in the discipline. Even those who are teaching General Education courses need to update themselves in their particular field.

Curriculum Influences

The results of the participant observation and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the faculty members and administrators in the college also identified several curriculum influences that they *always* consider whenever they plan, design, develop, revise and evaluate curriculum. These identified curriculum influences are shown in Table 1. These curriculum influences can be grouped into three: external, internal, and organizational.

These curriculum influences have a direct effect or influence on the development of curriculum standards for preschool teacher education. This idea is very useful in this study. The results of the observation and FGD also validate the ideas of many curriculum developers and curriculum workers that there are several factors influencing the curriculum development process whether in school-based or in national settings.

CONCLUSION

The study is successful in achieving its aim of creating a model for developing curriculum standards for preschool teacher education. The study found out that it is possible for curriculum theory to be developed by learning from the works of other curriculum scholars and by describing the current practices of curriculum development in any context. The curriculum development model in this study is useful not only for

Table 1. Summary of Curriculum Influences
Internal Influences • Students • College Philosophy, Vision and Mission • Objectives and Content of the Teacher Education Program of Harris • Admission & Retention Policies, & School Rules • Faculty Members • School Administrators (Including Board of Trustees)
External Influences • Requirements from Government Agencies (CHED) • National Competency-based Teacher Standards • Accreditation Standards • Licensure Examinations for Teachers (LET) • Preschool Curriculum in the Philippines • Market Demands • Needs of Local Schools • Alumni & Funding Sources • Professional Organizations • Media & Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) • Church & Church-related Agencies (for church-related schools)
Organizational Influences • School Facilities and other Resources • Other Disciplines or Courses and Programs Offered by the School • Student Services

developing curriculum standards for preschool teacher education but also in developing curriculum standards in all disciplines in any level.

The study also found out that while curriculum sources and influences are common to all contexts or in all curriculum development activities, the scholarly discussion on these areas can be expanded by looking at how these curriculum influences and sources work in a particular school setting. While all these curriculum sources and influences are important, their impact on curriculum development varies. The curriculum sources are seen to be influential in the macro level of curriculum development; however, in the level of implemented and achieved curriculum, these curriculum

sources are also considered by faculty members and other curriculum workers. This scenario also obtains in the context of curriculum influences. In the context of a school-based curriculum development, the curriculum influences are found to be more influential than the curriculum sources due to the direct effect of these curriculum influences to the process of curriculum development.

*Greg Tabios Pawilen is an Associate Professor teaching courses on Curriculum Studies at the College of Education, University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City
Email: gregpawilen@yahoo.com*

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