

SOME INSIGHTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT CURRICULUM: A STRIVING STEP TOWARDS WORLD CLASS UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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Abstract

This paper aims at identifying the need of developing the current English Department Curriculum as an anticipatory step facing the global challenge, the importance of having needs analysis to initiate the development of the current curriculum and some possible problems to deal with those matters.

The result of the analysis shows that the development of the current English Department Curriculum is unavoidable. This will be an important step towards facing the global challenge as one of the leading universities to become a world class university. This development of the curriculum will not be effectively carried out without conducting needs analysis as the starting point. This study identifies some possible problems related to the development of the current curriculum. These problems can be divided in terms of the teaching and learning facilities, human resources involved in the practice of the curriculum, as well as the time needed to conduct the development.

In conclusion, the development of the current curriculum is not an easy thing to do. It must be initiated by a need analysis process on the stake-holders involved and also there must be big support from the institution as well as from the individuals involved in the development of the curriculum.

Keywords: *curriculum, development, English, university.*

Introduction

In line with the global challenge, the need to improve the quality of people is unavoidable. This will not be possible without improving the quality of national educational system. Having good quality of educators could be one of the most significant steps in getting better improvement on our national educational system. Yogyakarta State University as one of the university with educational identity

needs to face this challenge as one of its major duties is providing qualified teachers in the future. Considering this, a good and suitable curriculum needs to be prepared by this institution in order to answer the challenge. There must a very broad study concerning the curriculum for the institution.

This particular study, however, tries to identify three main issues related to the development of one of departments within this institution, that is, the English Education Department Curriculum, as one of the department of this institution which could be a hard work towards reaching world class university level.

In line with the number of people using English in the world has placed English one of the most spoken languages in the world. English Education Department as the department concerning the development of the English language teaching and learning needs to consider the fact that nowadays, English has not only been one of the international languages, it has been becoming the lingua franca (Graddol, 2006) of people in the world.

The national curriculum has put English as one of the subjects in schools starting from junior high school levels and even recently it has been taught in lower levels, namely elementary and also kinder garden particularly in big cities. English Education Department has to anticipate this challenge by providing good quality English teachers having good English proficiency that hopefully could help and encourage their learners to be able to master English as well as use the language in the real communication. This, in fact is not an easy work to do. Indeed, providing a good curriculum for the department could be the most essential step to do.

The issues of this particular study involve the identification of the need to develop the current English Department Curriculum, the importance of having needs analysis to initiate the development of the curriculum, and some possible problems accompanying the development of the current curriculum. This paper will be divided into three parts: the introduction, which mainly concern the background of the study, the discussion, in which there will be discussions on the three main issues and the last part will be the conclusion of this particular study.

The Need to Develop the Current English Education Curriculum

The English Education as one of departments of Yogyakarta State University aims at producing junior and senior high school English teachers mastering four basic competencies, namely, academic competence, personal competence, as well as professional and social competence. In line with the need to produce highly qualified teachers in the future, the need to have a good implementation of national curriculum is unavoidable.

This particular study mainly concerns with three main issues concerning the need to develop the current curriculum of the English Education Department. Those are the notion of the curriculum, the implementation of the current curriculum, and also the importance of developing it. Therefore, the discussion will be started from making a clear definition on the notion of the word *curriculum*. It seems that there must be a clear definition on the word *curriculum*. Finney in Richards and Renandya (2002: 70) states that the term *curriculum* is open to a variety of definitions: in its narrowest sense it is synonymous with the term *syllabus*, as in specification of the content and the ordering of *what* is to be

taught; in the wider sense it refers to all aspects of the planning, implementation and evaluation of an educational program, the *why, how well* together with the *what* of the teaching-learning process.

Kelly, however, defines curriculum as the overall rationale for the educational programme of an institution' and argues that any definition must include: the intentions of the planners, the procedures adopted for the implementation of those intentions, the actual experiences of the pupils resulting from the teachers' direct attempts to carry out their or the planner's intentions, and the 'hidden learning' that occurs as a by-product of the organization of the curriculum, and, indeed, of the school (Kelly, 1989: 14). The other definition mentioned by Richards, Platt and Platt in the Longman *Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (1992: 94) who mention curriculum as an educational programme which states:

1. The educational purpose of the programme (the ends).
2. The content, teaching procedures and learning experiences which will be necessary to achieve this purpose (the means).
3. Some means for assessing whether or not the educational ends have been achieved.

These definitions provide two basic interpretations on the notion of curriculum, i.e., curriculum as an object as well as a process. It is an object meaning that it is seen as a statement of plan, a process of implementation as well as a statement of teaching and learning outcomes. Curriculum in broader sense is seen as a dynamic process. It may be seen as a social event engaged in by various

groups of people. These people need to translate the institutional norms and behaviors on one hand, and express their own ideas about what they think should happen on the other. By this definition, however, curriculum serves as a frame of action, creating spaces for educators to achieve their goals and at the same time, it provides some restrictions on how they achieve those goals.

Considering these dual interpretation on *curriculum*, the English Education Department Curriculum, can be seen as the general plan of the institution in conducting the teaching and learning process. The implementation of the curriculum which is merely in the form of syllabus implemented in the classrooms needs to match the learners as well as the goals of national education. As one of the leading departments of this institution, this department needs to work hard in order to give the most benefits for the institution to get better quality of graduates which merely one of the indicators of becoming one of the leading universities in this country. Therefore, the development of the current curriculum document, in the form of developing suitable and better syllabuses for every lesson/subject is unavoidable. The development of the current curriculum is needed in order to reach the national and institution aims and objectives of teaching and learning process. This development will also be very beneficial for getting better quality of output as well as answering the global challenge. In line with the objectives of the institution to become one of the leading universities, this department needs to provide better quality of output that hopefully could participate in the international communication.

Needs Analysis in Developing the English Education Department Curriculum

In general term, Brown (1995: 35) defines need analysis (also called needs assessment) as the activities involved in gathering information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of students. It can be the basis for developing tests, materials, teaching activities, and evaluation strategies. Needs analysis gives the fundamental basis for decision making in developing as well as inventing the suitable curriculum. In this particular study, however, a simple needs analysis serves as the basis for designing a new syllabus in order to meet the learning goals mentioned in the curriculum. Brown (1995: 37-47) states that before conducting needs analysis there are some points to consider, namely:

1. Making decisions on who is to be consulted and what information needs to be collected.
2. Deciding on how to gather information, including identifying priorities
There are some various ways of collecting information, such as, interviews, focus groups, surveys, reviews, invite submissions, observation, and documents.
3. Breaking needs down into the following areas:-National Needs, Organizational Needs, Community Needs, Individual Needs.
4. Using the information to establish the curriculum aims and objectives.

In the case of developing the current English Education Department Curriculum, there are some important steps needed to be conducted. The following are the steps needed to be done by the curriculum planners in order to conduct needs analysis on the curriculum of the English Education Department.

1. Review the literature on approaches and methods of teaching the language.
2. Review current curriculum in comparable organizations, institutions or countries.
3. Identify national objectives and national outcomes.
4. Identify available resources, material and human.
5. Identify support structures e.g. expertise.
6. Identify broader language goals, the status of the language in this country.

These steps may provide adequate information on the current curriculum of the department that can be used to initiate the development of the current curriculum. These are only some suggestions on how to conduct the needs analysis for this department. However, these steps may be followed by other necessary steps in order to get the whole identification on the current curriculum as the basis of conducting the development. One of the other important steps may be in the form of choosing the suitable instrument and the procedure for conducting needs analysis. In addition, Brown (1995: 45) proposes the roles, instruments and procedures for need analysis as the following.

Needs Analyst's Role	Instrumentation	Procedure
Outsider looking in	Existing information	Record analysis System analysis Literature Review Letter Writing
	Tests	Proficiency Placement Diagnostic Achievement
	Observation	Case studies Diary studies Behaviour Observation Interactional Analysis Inventories
Facilitator drawing out information	Interviews	Individual Group
	Meetings	Delphi technique Advisory Interest group Review
	Questionnaires	Biodata surveys Opinion Surveys Self ratings Judgement ratings Q sort

Some Possible Problems Concerning the Development of the Curriculum

Having finished conducting needs analysis, the practice of the development of the curriculum will not be easily carried out. The curriculum developers as well as the needs analysts need to consider also some possible problems related to the development of the current curriculum. These problems can be divided in terms of the following.

1. Teaching and Learning Facilities

It is commonly believed that the teaching and learning process will be easily conducted when there are sufficient facilities to support the teaching

and learning process. The practice of the teaching and learning in this department is lack of providing enough facilities for the people involving in the process to participate effectively in the teaching and learning process.

2. Human Resources Involved in the Practice of the Curriculum

The practice of the development process will not be successfully done without considering the people involving in the teaching and learning process. Those are the students/ the learners, the educators/ the lecturers, the administrators, and the parents. In order to get a better output, the department needs to have a certain standard of selecting the students as well as having a specific program to improve the quality of the students. The department also needs to have highly qualified human resources to conduct and promote the teaching and learning process. It will be much beneficial for the department to have a board of parents. This board is expected to give information on the development of the teaching and learning process. The other important factor determining the success of the teaching and learning process conducting in this department is having dedicated administrators in charge of administration works.

3. The Time Needed to Conduct the Development

The curriculum planners need also to consider the time allowed to conduct the development on the curriculum.

4. Support from the Institution

Institution also plays an importance role in the development of the curriculum. A long process of the needs analysis will not be accomplished without the supports of the institution.

5. The Scope of every item in the Curriculum

In conducting the development of the current curriculum, the curriculum planners need also to consider the scope of the discussion of every subject in order to match with the government as well as the institutional objectives.

Conclusion and Implication

The results of the discussion in the previous parts of this study mention the following.

1. The development of the English Education Department Curriculum is unavoidable, considering its important role as one of the leading department of the institution to promote the world class university level.
2. Needs analysis is an important step to initiate the development of the curriculum. This will provide adequate information needed to conduct the development of the current curriculum.
3. There some possible problems related to the process of developing the current curriculum. Those problems are mainly related to the facilities,

human resources involving in the teaching and learning process, time allocation, and the scope of discussion.

This particular study gives some insights on the use of needs analysis as the basis for gathering sufficient information for developing the current curriculum.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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