



## Reviewing curriculum planning in junior high school and high school and the role of teachers in the process

*Mohammad Beyrami\* and Jamal Moradpoor\*\**

*\*Ph.D. Student Curriculum Development, Young Researchers And Elite Club, Marand Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marand, Iran*

*\*\*Ph.D. Student Curriculum Development, the Instructor of Farhangian University, Iran*

*(Corresponding author: Mohammad Beyrami)*

*(Received 01 October, 2015, Accepted 18 November, 2015)*

*(Published by Research Trend, Website: [www.researchtrend.net](http://www.researchtrend.net))*

**ABSTRACT:** The aim of this study is to review the curriculum planning in junior high school and high school students and teachers involved in this process. This study, according to the purpose, is applied and descriptive-field in terms of nature. In this research, the quality of curriculum planning junior high school and high school in Iran has been studied. Library documents and evidence, research reports in informatics bases related to Internet have been used to collect data. The educational system requires effective participation in curriculum planning and explaining how to take. In Iran, more than four decades of development experience shows that development is faced with serious problems. These problems are largely influenced by the conditions of the execution, social environment, economic, political and cultural conditions and characteristics of the elements participated in the program. Issues such as dissatisfaction with the textbooks, the number of titles of books, courses or lack of content, also the absence of exploration spirit during teaching-learning and lack of active participation of teachers in the curriculum, absence of deliberation in teachers' programs, lack of attention to social and cultural conditions and mostly centralization and robustness of the application against the teacher training are the characteristics of the curriculum planning current system in Iran. Curriculum planning tradition in Iran rather than the role of teacher participation in the program compilation, mainly has been directed towards the implementation of the program by teachers. The end of this research was to present an applied model of curriculum planning for junior high school and high school education, quality strategies of curriculum planning of the course and strategies of the introduction of fundamentals of curriculum planning and principles of learning for teachers.

**Keywords:** Curriculum planning, junior high school and high school, teachers participation.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's world, educational system refers to a set of institutions and educational organizations shaped across the social and cultural thoughts, rules and values of each of the countries. The history of education represents an evolution and development that has changed that from it is a relative and simple shape and content of the very few and limited into a new and complex with extensive content that shows human intellectual achievements.

It is noteworthy that the mere existence of an institution as education, even though massive and developed, can not realize the cultural, social and economic objectives of a community. But A system that is efficient and effective can meet the above characteristics, otherwise no doubt the educational system will become as a wasting agent of precious and scarce facilities and opportunities.

Theory and Literature: The second half of the twentieth century witnessed vast changes in the international and internal political, economic, social and cultural relations. These changes have made the invention of innovative and diverse methods in all parts of

education. Today citizen than in the past, is aware of their individual and social rights and his/her demands have been increased. These increase requires qualitative and quantitative improvement of education and curriculum planning development in order to meet the expectations and demands of citizens. For this reason, policy makers and curriculum planners, play a decisive role in the promotion and so in secured individual and social rights of people. Therefore, the educational system needs effective participation of people in the curriculum planning and explains how their participation. In this context, curriculum planning as a specialized field is always faced with the question of what groups participate in the compilation of curriculum planning and how participation it is. In Iran, the experience of more than four decades of developmental planning (Nafisi, 1990, pages 15-29) shows that development has been facing with serious problems. These problems are largely influenced by the conditions of the execution, social, political and cultural environment and characteristics of the elements of the participants in the program.

The issues such as dissatisfaction with the textbooks, the number of course titles, subjects or lack of content of books (Ghourchian, 1995, p. 3), also the absence of exploration spirit in the teaching-learning process and lack of active participation of teachers in curriculum planning process, lack of depth sightedness and failure in teacher training programs (Mehrmohammadi, 1995, p. 18), lack of attention to the conditions and social and cultural facilities and most of all, centralization and robustness of the program against the teacher (Mehrmohammadi, 1995, p. 22), are the characteristics of the current system of the curriculum planning in Iran. In the current system, teachers based on educational common traditions, are not sufficiently engaged in planning and are only the operators. However, according to Silver, Lewis and Alexander, the success or failure of the best or the weakest curriculum planning depends on design and implementation of the teacher. Also the research on the curriculum planning shows that the implementation of a curriculum planning in the classroom depends on the teacher participation in curriculum planning process (according to Izadi, 2000, p. 3).

As a result, the participation of teachers is from the theoretical topics of curriculum planning that determines the quality of the product or the design curriculum planning (Mehrmohammadi, 1997). According to Mehrmohammadi, the tradition of curriculum planning in Iran rather than the role of teacher participation in the program compilation, is more inclined to implement the program by the teachers. As a result, the curriculum planning is usually designed and compiled by subjective specialists and operational considerations affecting the program are less intended. So, Izadi in his Ph.D. thesis on education (majoring in curriculum planning) studied the strengths and weaknesses of centralized and decentralized curriculum planning and compiled "semi-centralized pattern of curriculum planning with emphasis on the role of teachers in the process of curriculum planning" as the desired pattern.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this study is to review the curriculum planning in junior high school and high school students and teachers involved in this process. This study, according to the purpose, is applied and descriptive-field in terms of nature. In this research, the quality of curriculum planning junior high school and high school in Iran has been studied. Library documents and evidence, research reports in informatics bases related to Internet have been used to collect data.

## **FINDINGS**

The quality of curriculum planning in junior high school and high school.

Determination, informed integration and application of the opinion in the appropriate curriculum planning based on the study of theoretical, philosophical-value, cultural and social foundation in the field of education and in accordance with the objectives, is the fundamental stage in the process of curriculum planning that is effective based on other stages of the design and compilation process will be fundamentally flawed regardless of the "conceptualization" of the step and its structure.

The results show that in the design and compilation of curriculum planning for high schools in different stages, different combinations of view - implicitly and not based on a theoretical framework in the field of curriculum planning - have been used. In curriculum planning, design and compilation of the high school course, subject-orientation and transferring books information and human training with information was the most important emphasized perspective. Now, if we analyze our educational system with the systematic approach, we will see that the system has not the required efficiency and faces some quantitative and qualitative numerous issues and problems.

One of the problems of our educational system is the curriculum planning issue in the educational system. The issues raised by teachers, students, employers, experts, teachers, students, administrators and citizens show their dissatisfaction with the textbooks, increasing the number of course titles, not updating content, non-observance of vertical and horizontal integration and discontinuity of concepts in various levels of education, inconsistency of textbooks content with learners needs and community and less little attention to the nature of knowledge and the related educational fields. The weakness of assessment system of educational achievement, excessive attention to exams and mnemonic methods, integral components of curriculum planning such as teacher training, in-service education and compilation of the books should be added to the foregoing. Therefore, we should try make our educational system more efficient and productive and take steps to improve the development of educational system and community.

In this part, we will present some weaknesses and problems of our educational system. Several studies have revealed inefficiencies of curriculum planning of Islamic Studies in the educational system of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The findings indicate that because of the traditional approach to the "issue-orientation" and not using of active and dynamic methods at teaching the course on the one hand, and lack of education, especially religious education consistent with individual and natural needs of audiences on the other hand, has made the Islamic Studies as a boring course for students. The evidence from other studies suggest that studying Islamic Studies course not only gave rise to a positive attitude towards this course, but also a negative attitude have been created in students.

While it is considered that this would lead to the establishment and strengthening of no relationship between religious knowledge with real life from their perspective. Thus, religious education programs in achieving the goals set for training a new generation are not efficient. Samadi (2001) in the compilation of Ph.D. thesis entitled "Designing a plan for Islamic Studies course for high school course and accordance of the official curriculum planning with the course", investigates the suggested pattern with religious official curriculum plan and concludes that there is not a regular and consistent in religious curriculum planning. The results of research show that most of the teachers in the field of the study of cognitive foundations of education, the required knowledge and professional skills are not desirable. Mehri Abedi Isfahani (2000) has done research on "Evaluation of personal information of teachers in guidance school in the field of design and preparation of exams and assessment skills in Isfahan province." The results of this research suggest that the teachers, generally, are in low awareness on the principles and scientific methods and educational assessment and lack sufficient knowledge about the objectives of junior high school and lack the required skills to assess higher levels. There is a significant difference between teachers' awareness and educational degree. Daeizadeh (2006) has done a research entitled "The study of familiarity of high school teachers with the basics of curriculum planning and learning principles in the province of Mazandaran at the School Year 2005-2006" as a Ph.D. thesis in the field of curriculum planning with Dr. Ali Shariatmadari as the guiding professor and the results are as follows: The awareness of most of high school teachers of philosophical, psychological, sociological foundation of curriculum planning and learning principles are moderate. Also, the awareness of male teachers is more than female teachers, and holders of a master's degree and higher with a 10 to 19 years of service records is more than others. With regard to educational fields, teachers of educational sciences group than those in the humanities and basic sciences have more awareness. Also in connection with years of service, the history of teachers with 10 to 19 years of service records are more aware than those with more than 20 years and under 10 years.

Ghanbari Pourtalami (2000) has done a research entitled "Evaluation of the use of active teaching method recommended in guiding books of experimental sciences of elementary 5th grade, by the teachers in the city of Rasht and its impact on the educational performance of students in the school year" with Dr. A. Kiamanesh, as Master's degree in educational science of Tehran Teacher Training Center. The results stated that there is not any significant difference between the average of the score of high and low group teaching skills of teachers in the field of skills of "viewing, hypothesizing, research, communication and process

skills" and also no significant and strong relationship between the average of the score of high and low group teachers that the process skills with teaching score and there is not any significant relationship between the score of high and low group teaching with educational performance of the students in science.

Abyar (2005) has done a research entitled "The study of the factors affecting the performance of teachers from the viewpoint of principals and teacher of schools in Eilam " as Master's degree. The results show that there is a significant difference among the factors such as in-service education, job satisfaction, education, the work place, welfare service, proper teaching methods and assessment and performance of teachers. This means that these factors have a positive effect on the performance of teachers. Abbaszadeh (2000) in a study entitled "Evaluation of teachers' knowledge of Mazandaran province with educational materials and their application in education" implies that most teachers do not have much information about educational goals and the lack the required skills to apply educational tools and techniques. 95% of teachers are not familiar with the scientific practices of educational assessment and are unaware of its use in teaching.

Danaei (2007) has done a research entitled "The study of the awareness of experimental science teachers of junior high school about learning theories and relationship with educational achievements of the students of the city of Sanandaj". The results show that there about 90% of male teachers and 80% of female teachers, are familiar with the principles and theories of learning at a high level and the level of knowledge for male teachers is more men than women. Regarding the knowledge of theory and its relationship with educational achievement it should be said that about 74% of the students are from high educational achievement and about 26% of poor educational achievement.

Ali Shariatmadari (1959) has done a research entitled "The study of the knowledge of educational information of elementary schools teacher in Iran". The results show that the said teachers are not desirable in the knowledge of the field of educational science and teaching practices.

According to the results of the research carried out by Valipour (2008) titled "the awareness of the teachers of junior high school and high school about fundamentals of curriculum planning and principles of learning", the knowledge of junior high school and high school teachers on the fundamentals of curriculum planning and principles of learning is intermediate and also the knowledge of the teachers on philosophical fundamentals of curriculum planning and principles of learning is weak, on philosophical fundamentals curriculum planning in intermediate level, sociological fundamentals of curriculum planning in good level and principles of learning in intermediate level.

The findings are consistent with the research carried out by Daeizadeh (2006), Abedi (2000), Tajik (2004), Abyar (2005) and Abbaszadeh (2000). According to the said research and studies, most of the teachers have not enough knowledge on the principles of learning and teaching methods and scientific principles of assessment, curriculum planning targets and educational technology. Given the role of teachers in education and learning-teaching process, the findings show that the awareness of the junior high school and high school teachers on the fundamentals of curriculum planning and principles of learning is intermediate.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Providing an applied pattern in curriculum planning for junior high school and high school courses: Today, desired establishment and continuation of the system of education is strongly affected by the quality of planning and the planning of learning-teaching activities is the most important in this regard. Setting a desirable curriculum planning requires a comprehensive attention to philosophical, psychological and social fundamentals and the principles of learning that should be considered by teachers. Teachers should recognize the social functions of school and benefit from it at meeting the present and future needs of the community. On the other hand, they must know that teaching and learning is naturally a mutual communication system.

The classroom is as a social dynamic group and school as a social institution. Today, teachers need to design, conduct and organize the experience by which learners reach an understanding not merely abstract and simple information and skills and to memorize the abstract information and skills ( Shariatmadari, 2008, p. 318). Therefore, the teaching and education as well as the educational beliefs and ideas of teachers requires fundamental change that such a change requires a deep understanding of the nature of the curriculum planning, principles and models of curriculum planning and learning principles.

The community expects differently from teachers as those who have the mission of education and students who are the future of the community. In the future, we will need people who can lead themselves, make decisions, deal with problems and solve them and think on affairs. They must be adept negotiators. In addition, they should have the features such as flexibility, initiative, creativity, resourcefulness and open mindedness. Teachers organize the experiences that strengthen and develop the features in the students and provide the students with the understanding the sense and concept of science and scientific phenomena and perception of relations and patterns (Yarmohammadian, 1998, p. 14).

### *Suggestions and Strategies*

#### *A. Strategies for the quality of curriculum planning of junior high school and high school*

1. For high school curriculum planning and writing textbooks of high school course, experts in all fields (psychology, curriculum planning experts and specialists, labor market experts, etc.) should be applied.

2. The contents of textbooks in high school course should be consistent with the interests of learners and their needs and the needs of society.

3. When writing textbooks for high school course, the rules and standards for writing textbooks such as vertical and horizontal organization, active learning, as well as the coordination of teaching time must be met.

4. The compilation of textbooks for high school course and other planning factors such as in-service education, appropriate teaching methods, new assessment methods and appropriate to content must be consistent and in harmony.

#### *B. Strategies to familiarize teachers with the fundamentals of curriculum planning and learning principles*

1. Changing the attitudes to a teacher and ways of training and supply in the community at all management levels; accepting the fact that changing or correcting the educational system and solving many of the problems of education in Iran depends on the employment and training of competent teachers and investing in this way is the most effective investment. The attitude in senior managers would allocate more funds and approval of various projects related to the training of teachers.

2. Promotion of the belief that a teacher is very technical and specialized person. If all of those responsible for national planning believe that teaching is a technical and specialized profession like a medicine and pharmacy and etc, and without obtaining the necessary qualifications, somebody can not be a teacher in schools, teacher training centers and teachers training will be considered as an important issue and employing teachers in this way will be the most important policy of national planning and Ministry of Education.

3. Due to the progress of science and the need of teachers for more knowledge, the retraining courses for all teachers are required. So that, at least once a year, each of the teachers of the ministry obtain new information and become familiar with the new findings of science and education.

4. To enhance the capabilities of teachers in the field of psychological foundations, in-service education curriculum planning on the subjects of psychology, theories of learning and creative thinking and principles of psychology and curriculum planning for all teachers of junior high school and high school must be planned.

5. Whereas, having the abilities of the introduction to the community, needs and problems of contemporary community, culture and its components and its relationship with education, qualifications and social skills are of the teachers sociological data, the in-

service education must be held for promoting the knowledge of teachers, as correspondence or distance educational systems.

6. Since teachers need develop their awareness and knowledge about the nature of learning, the factors affecting learning, the role of schools in teaching, important theories of learning and principles, for educational growth and achievement, also the results showed that they are in moderate level in this field, it is recommended the in-service education correspondence education course to be held between I.R.I.B. and Ministry of Education, according to the contract of I.R.I.B.

7. Since the introduction of all teachers in junior high school and high school courses with "Research during operation" or "action research" may improve their knowledge, it is recommended that the research during operation to be used as a successful approach to combine teaching with thinking a as new approach in educational research and curriculum planning of teacher training centers and in-service education because of the features and benefits increasingly to improve the quality of education and increase the efficiency of teachers.

8. According to the research findings, it is suggested that education must evaluate the teachers' knowledge of scientific fundamentals of curriculum planning and learning principles and their professional skills needed and those needed to be trained must attend in in-service education courses during the academic year and during the summer sessions to improve their knowledge. Teachers are working in the teaching profession with their information during education and this makes them neglect to study and increase their knowledge and awareness.

## REFERENCE

- Abbaszadeh, G. (2000). Evaluation of teachers' knowledge of Mazandaran province with educational materials and their application in education. Mazandaran province Organization of Research.
- Abedi Esfahani, M. (2000). Evaluation of personal information of teachers in guidance school in the field of design and preparation of exams and assessment skills in Isfahan province. Isfahan. Organization of Education.
- Abyar, Sh. (2005). The study of the factors affecting the performance of teachers from the viewpoint of principals and teacher of schools in Eilam. Tehran, Payame Noor University, Master's Degree thesis.
- Daeizadeh, H. (2006). The knowledge of Junior high school and high school teachers on the fundamentals of curriculum planning and learning principles. The quarterly of knowledge and research in educational sciences. Khorasgan Branch of Islamic Azad University (Isfahan). No. 13, pp 1-24.
- Danaei, A. (2007). The study of the knowledge of high school teachers of experimental science on learning theories and its relationship with educational achievement of students in Sanandaj city. Master's degree Thesis. Tehran.
- Ghanbari Pourtalemi, F. (2000). Evaluation of the use of active teaching method recommended in guiding books of experimental sciences of elementary 5th grade, by the teachers in the city of Rasht and its impact on the educational performance of students in the school year. Master's Degree thesis.
- Ghourchian, N. (1995). Reviewing the developments process of curriculum planning as a specialized field of the ancient world to the modern world. Tehran: Institution of Higher Education Research and Planning.
- Izadi, S. (2000). Designing a semi-concentrated pattern for curriculum planning system in Iran and the roles of teachers in curriculum planning process. Ph.D. thesis, Tarbiat Modares University .
- Mazandarani, S. (1998). The study of the quality of the curriculum planning of high school course according to the views of specialists of the curriculum planning department and authors of textbooks and teachers of the courses of Physics, Chemistry, Arabic and Foreign Language of the 3rd Grade of high school in Gorgan city. Master's degree thesis. Teacher Training University.
- Mehrmohammadi, M. (1995). The study on the nature of the centralized system of curriculum planning, the Education quarterly, Nos. 41-42, spring and summer, p18.
- Mehrmohammadi, M. (1995). Investigation of some aspects of education in Federal Germany and its comparison with the education in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran, Research Institute of Education, p 22.
- Mehrmohammadi, M. (1997). Optimal combination for decision-makers in the process of curriculum planning, Humanities scientific and research quarterly of Alzahra University, Nos. 24 and 25, winter and spring, pp137-149.
- Nafisi, A. (1990). Reviewing the experience of developmental planning of education in Iran. the quarterly of Education, Nos. 22 and 23, pp 15-29.
- Salsabili, N. (2000). A model on the application of curriculum planning views in the curriculum planning systems of the country (the new system high school). Ph.D. thesis, Teacher Training University.
- Shariatmadari, A. (1959). The study of the educational knowledge of elementary course teachers in Iran. Ph.D. Thesis, Tennessee University of USA.
- Shariatmadari, A. (2008). Educational Psychology. Tehran: Amirkabir Publications, 20th edition.
- Samadi, P. (2001). Designing a plan for Islamic Studies course for high school course and accordance of the official curriculum planning with the course. Ph.D. thesis. Tarbiat Modares University.

- Tajik, A. (2004). The performance of the teachers of elementary course fifth grade with regards to the awareness of targets, teaching method, teaching skills, application of educational materials, assessment method and quality of examination questions in the course of Social Studies. Ph.D Thesis, Teacher Training University of Tehran.
- Valipour, A. (2008). Evaluation of the knowledge of the teachers of high school course on the fundamentals of curriculum planning and learning principles in Mazandaran province. *New Thoughts in Educational Sciences quarterly*. 3rd year, No. 4, pp135-151.
- Yarmohammadian, M. (1998). *Principles of Curriculum Planning*, Tehran, Yadvareh Ketab publications.