

Editorial

TVET[@]Asia Issue 11: Curriculum Development for TVET – Various Approaches

As a result of the decades long discussions about approaches of curricula development for TVET completely different perspectives have emerged. Above all the discussion on academic subject matters for different courses, concepts, articulation, and contextualisation of curricula or standard-based curricula are in the focus of interest. Curricula approaches, however, can not only be closely linked to learning theories - such as the constructivist learning principles and others. Curricula approaches might also give an orientation along the established and rather formal classifications of curricula such as learner-centred curricula approaches, spiral curricula approaches, the action-based learning approach etc. Furthermore, the design and the development of curricula - based on research - is an important issue for the establishment of suitable curriculum approaches that supports the development of quality in TVET and is matching the demands of the society and the labour market.

TVET systems are thus challenged to ensure the learner's acquisition of relevant competences for the world of work, assuring established quality standards which are known and acknowledged in ASEAN countries and beyond. The continuous development of TVET systems would motivate decision makers, curriculum developers and practitioners who are following five key objectives:

1. to improve relevance and quality of TVET by enhancing legislation and the application of vocational educational standards,
2. to provide an easier access and improved permeability in TVET ensuring learning in all phases of one's life,
3. to actualise the definition of basic skills towards 21st century skills and competences for the knowledge society,
4. to combine general education and TVET in order to introduce it to the local environment, to ASEAN countries and to the world,
5. to propose a best possible use of resources in order to ensure high employability and decent incomes of graduates.

In order to implement these objectives, the quality of the vocational educational systems has to be improved in a way that they train vocational learners for current and future work which responds to the needs of the individuals and the demand of the labour market. While the idea of an ASEAN vocational educational policy has long been discussed but not yet adequately established, education and training in the individual countries is carried through based on highly different curricula structures.

Curricula determine the framework conditions of any learning organizations and the prerequisites for competence development. Curricula are supposed to determine the extent of the competences

to be developed in terms of breadth, depth, flexibility, and adequacy for the labour market within a given socio-economic context.

A review of literature on curriculum development, however, confirms that there is rather no theoretical or political discussion on the contents and the structure of the curricula as it has been the case in North America and Central Europe throughout the last century. Far worse is the fact, that many countries in Asia - often only equipped with limited experience in occupational standards and curriculum development - are confronted with blueprints of TVET approaches and respective curricula which have their origin in highly sophisticated VET systems, such as competence-based training or the dual cooperative training. Therefore, the undifferentiated application must fail and often leads to irritations and misunderstanding by the involved applicants – like TVET representatives, providers, employers and users.

The articles edited in this issue as well as other contributions which reached us during the editing process show the impact of this widespread dilemma in the TVET community in Asia which calls for a rather fast improvement. Nevertheless,

- a) there are reflections on qualification and curriculum research and the corresponding specific interrelationship from the practitioners' perspective, and
- b) there was an attempt to conceive approaches for curriculum development that not only consider the needs of the labour market but also the interests of the subjects in order to enable the learner in TVET systems to pursue an academic career.

The analysis of approaches of curriculum development on an international level proves that the focus is on pragmatic curriculum development. The closer interrelationship between qualification research, competence development and curriculum research is being discussed less explicitly but rather implicitly according to the motto: Both, qualification research and curriculum development are needed, but do not belong together. From the point of the labor market relevance of TVET such a situation is unacceptable and raises the question what could be done to effectively counter this development in order to move towards a unity in the future.

For issue 11 of TVET@Asia we have asked scholars, researchers, curriculum developers, practitioners and teachers to submit articles discussing

- theoretical approaches of curricula development based on qualification research, action research and others.
- work-process related curricula approaches to support TVET quality.
- curricula approaches and competence development in the context of Industry 4.0.
- national curricula development processes, standards and their institutional background.
- design of curricula for certain courses or programmes (examples) in the context of Industry 4.0.
- “best practice” curricula approaches.
- curricula development based on experimental learning in industry.

The interesting outcome of this process is that most of the proposed articles are dealing with

- national processes of curriculum development,
- courses or programmes which are relevant within specific institutions, or
- examples for “best practices”.

Articles focusing on theoretical approaches or on the requirements of Industry 4.0 were not submitted. The principles and relations of work-process-based curricula are discussed in one of the articles (GOERG SPOETTL and GERT LOOSE) and in another article (GOUHAR PIRZADA), declared as a case study. The author demonstrates how work-process-related curricula are applied in the Fashion and Textile Design sector in Pakistan. Two of the articles are discussing national requirements of curriculum development. MALAKA SAMARA explains the continuing updating of traditional curricula up to competence-based curricula in Palestine and evaluates the results based on empirical findings. VO XUAN-TIEN describes the efforts in Vietnam to establish an approach for work-process-based curricula. The aim is to harmonize the industrial requirements and the interests of the country. Another article by SVEN SCHULTE states examples of how *Learn- and Work-Assignments* can help to shape curricula for specific demands. A country specific approach of curriculum development based on a very broad interpretation is provided by MOCHAMAD BRURI TRIYONO and DEWI EKA MURNIATI.

Finally, an article by GEOFF BERRY, SUOS SOVANN and LENG MANIPHEA shows an exemplary approach to vocational education in Cambodia and provides an important contribution to the qualification of disadvantaged young people.

Thank you all for your contribution. Please enjoy reading!

The editors of Issue 11

Rolf Gennrich, Georg Spöttl, Bruri Triyono, Mohd Yusoff Abu Bakar