



REFRAMING PRODUCTIVE PEDAGOGIES FOR EVALUATING CURRICULA IN AFRICAN CONTEXTS

Grames CHIRWA

Mzuzu University, Malawi

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-6601-6588>

grameschirwa@yahoo.co.uk

Precious NYONI

Zhejiang Normal University, Malawi

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1698-4108>

preciousnyonij@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study evaluated the implementation of Malawi's Expressive Arts curriculum in six primary schools. Data were collected from twelve Standard 7 and 8 Expressive Arts teachers through curriculum document review, questionnaires, classroom observations, and post-observation interviews. Illuminative Evaluation was used as the conceptual framework, particularly its distinction between the instructional system and the learning milieu. While this distinction enabled the study to separate curriculum policy from classroom implementation, it did not provide sufficiently specific analytical criteria for examining teachers' classroom practices. The study therefore adopted the four-dimensional Productive Pedagogies framework—intellectual quality, connectedness to the world beyond the classroom, engagement with difference, and supportive classroom environment—to guide data collection and analysis. However, difficulties in determining the forms of knowledge taught in lessons led to the addition of a fifth dimension: curriculum. The findings indicate that Productive Pedagogies can be useful for curriculum evaluation in African contexts, but the framework requires reframing to account more explicitly for intrinsic and instrumental forms of knowledge, local cultural contexts, and interactive forms of classroom participation. The article recommends a revised Productive Pedagogies framework that is more responsive to curriculum evaluation in Malawi and other African educational contexts.

Keywords: Expressive arts, illuminative evaluation, learning milieu, Malawi curriculum, productive pedagogies.

INTRODUCTION

To improve the quality of education in Malawi, the Ministry of Education has reviewed the primary school curriculum. The curriculum was reviewed to remove content overload. The previous curriculum had too many subjects. The curriculum was also reviewed to change it to an Outcomes-Based curriculum, a curriculum design adopted in the Southern African region. Expressive Arts is one of the nine subjects in the primary school curriculum. It is an integrated curriculum combining the subject disciplines of Creative Arts, Physical Education, Music, Drama, and Needlecraft.

The adoption of an OBE curriculum in Malawi arose from regional influences, particularly the first Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Education and Training adopted in 1997. The Protocol influenced the formulation of a new feature in South African education and curriculum landscape: an Outcomes Based Curriculum. By 2004, a number of SADC countries including Malawi adopted an Outcomes Based Curriculum. The design features of the Malawi Outcomes Based Education curriculum have been influenced by South Africa's Outcomes Based Curriculum (Motara, 2022). Paradoxically, the introduction of an outcomes-based curriculum in Malawi may have a similar effect as in South Africa where grades seem lower on standardized tests when compared to grades in other countries in the sub-Saharan region (Motara, 2022), a phenomenon



which Malawi needs to avoid with the implementation of its new curriculum. Following the introduction of the new curriculum, this study aimed to evaluate the extent to which the Expressive Arts curriculum is being implemented as intended. The study aimed at uncovering how the Expressive Arts curriculum is enacted in diverse classrooms in primary schools in Malawi.

The fact that globalisation and outside influences have caused an increase in the convergence of ideas and practices (including educational practices) across national settings makes this article significant to readers outside of Malawi. Chisholm (2005) asserts that it is unnecessary to understand the connections between local, national, regional, and global educational environments in a linear fashion that goes up or down. She contends that concepts and regulations, particularly those pertaining to education, can flow between levels, reshaping themselves at each stage and procedure to fit local conditions as they go from the international to the national and back to the regional. Due to Southern Africa's influence on the continent, the article's ideas have a greater chance of being adopted by educationists in Africa, which is why the reframing of productive pedagogies framework for use in African contexts may be relevant to readers outside of Malawi.

Research Problem

The Malawian government introduced the Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR) with the goal of raising educational standards in response to deficiencies found in the previous curriculum. The new National Primary Curriculum (NPC) was created to solve problems including an exam-focused teaching approach rather than one that is learner-centered and content overload from a variety of disciplines (Khomani, 2013).

After the new national primary curriculum for Malawi was recently introduced and adopted, the purpose of this study was to assess how the Expressive Arts curriculum was being implemented. This paper became essential due to Young's assertion about the importance of knowledge in the curriculum, and its absence in the Productive Pedagogies theory (Lingard, 2007). This theory was utilized as the foundation for assessing a new curriculum in Malawi. Additionally, it has been stated that while disciplinary expertise could be assumed in talks on pedagogy in Western countries, it cannot be assumed in African countries (Hugo et al 2018). Academic expertise cannot be taken for granted in any evaluation of curriculum innovation conducted in Africa. In this study, the separation of curricular policy analysis from practice was facilitated by the "Instructional System" and the "Learning Milieu," two of the core components of Illuminative Evaluation. However, it lacked clear guidelines for assessing teachers' actual teaching techniques. Consequently, the research employed the four-dimensional Productive Pedagogies framework, encompassing engagement with difference, intellectual quality, external connectivity, and a supportive classroom environment. These dimensions, however, fell short of fully capturing the intrinsic and instrumental improvements made to the curriculum. The paper argues that the framework of Productive Pedagogy (Bourdieu, 1974; Hayes et al., 2006; Lingard, 2007) should have indicators for both instrumental and intrinsic knowledge, as well as a fifth dimension called curriculum. The knowledge forms-focused analysis of the study emphasizes the necessity of redefining "Productive Pedagogies" to assess curriculum improvements in African contexts.

Literature Review

Illuminative Evaluation

The notion of illuminative evaluation and the previously stated conceptual distinction between the "learning milieu" and the "instructional system" served as the study's guiding principles (Parlett and Hamilton, 2020). Bourdieu's perspective on the utility of concepts as "tools for thought" has proven valuable for this research. According to Bourdieu, concepts serve as cognitive instruments that must be adaptable to evolving empirical circumstances. He clarifies, nevertheless, that he does not necessarily mean for conceptual tools to be "vague, approximate, or confused" when he suggests that they should remain open and temporary. Bourdieu (1990) states that concepts can and should, to some



extent, be open and provisional. This does not imply that they should be ambiguous, imprecise, or confusing. The "suggestive" character of concepts, according to Bourdieu (1990, p. 41), "gives them their capacity to produce scientific effects (by showing things that have never been seen before" Second, Bourdieu mentions the application of ideas that serve as markers to direct research. The importance of notions "that function as signposts pointing to phenomena that are worth examining" is highlighted by Bourdieu (1990, p. 40). Thirdly, concepts should be objects of study rather than tools. This entails putting principles into practice while also "testing" them. According to Gramsci (2020), p. 13, Bourdieu's counsel makes "good sense" in this study because it applies a Western theory and framework to an African setting.

The goal of an illuminating evaluation is to shed light on the execution of innovative educational projects, including how they function, how different school environments affect them, what the pros and cons are as perceived by those involved, and how they most directly impact students' intellectual experiences. The term "Instructional System" in Illuminative Evaluation refers to the organised and documented materials that serve as a roadmap for instruction and learning. Syllabi, books for teachers and students, and any other pertinent teaching and learning resources are included in these papers. Parlett and Hamilton (2020) argue that the implementation of a curriculum within a complex, real-world context results in its alteration. They define the "learning milieu" as the classroom setting, encompassing the instructional methods, assessment approaches, and individual characteristics of instructors, including their professional expertise. This approach's main advantage is that it evaluates an intervention holistically, identifying contextual realities that affect the intervention as a whole.

Important elements of the "Learning Milieu" are the teaching and evaluation strategies used, as well as the unique qualities of each instructor, such as their professional background. This approach's main advantage is that it evaluates an intervention holistically, identifying contextual realities that affect the intervention as a whole.

To write about the "instructional system," curriculum policy is examined. Documentary information analysis can reveal certain areas for investigation and offer insightful information, such as the program's history. Information on the "learning milieu" is gathered through observation. Through familiarisation in an authentic environment, observation enables the assessor to compile an ongoing log of ongoing activities, exchanges, and casual comments to identify noteworthy statements. At this point, the evaluator uses the classroom and conducts teacher and student interviews to gather data. The evaluator's observations offer the "emic" perspective. The stories, explanations, and analyses of an innovation that are deemed appropriate by the members or participants under study are the main focus of the "emic" perspective.

Illuminative evaluation has become a standard practice in evaluation research in education, both generally and particularly in the context of arts education in Africa and beyond. For instance, Nyirenda (1994) evaluated the introduction of changes to the national curriculum in Science and Mathematics in Malawi; Lowe (2008) investigated the teaching of Mathematics in Malawi's rural primary schools; Kamwendo (2021) assessed the introduction of the new English curriculum in Malawi's primary schools; and Mdaka (2007) evaluated the introduction of South Africa's Grade 7 outcomes-based Algebra curriculum. These investigations, which concentrated on the "instructional system" and "learning milieu," employed the unique conceptual components of illuminative evaluation. Globally, Tuah (1982) reviewed the introduction of the new curriculum innovation known as Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah (KBSR) in rural primary schools in Sarawak, Malaysia, while Nichols (1998) evaluated the "Thinking Skills" curriculum innovation in Devon, United Kingdom.

The evaluation studies identified areas of agreement as well as "gaps" between the implemented and planned courses. But these results just touched the tip of the iceberg, revealing basic similarities and differences between the actual curriculum and the one that was intended. Therefore, to offer a more thorough examination, the Expressive Arts curriculum in Malawi was assessed using Illuminative

evaluation in conjunction with Productive Pedagogies Lingard (2007). The objective of this method was to carefully evaluate and analyze the empirical data used in the current investigation.

Productive Pedagogies

The basis for Productive Pedagogies is the School Reform Longitudinal Study (SRLS) that was carried out in Queensland Schools, in Australia, between 1998 and 2001 (Ahmad et al., 2012). This framework was developed by Hayes et al. (2006) as a research tool to examine instructional strategies that improve high-quality education for all students, regardless of their circumstances. Four essential elements make up Productive Pedagogies: intellectual quality, connectedness to the world beyond the classroom, engagement with difference, and supportive classroom environment. Numerous indicators provide an in-depth understanding of these characteristics.

Historically, classes employing productive pedagogies have shown a positive correlation with students' academic achievement (Hayes et al., 2006). Consequently, Malawi adopted Productive Pedagogies as a suitable framework for evaluating its new curriculum. Given its recognized effectiveness in understanding how educators cultivate sufficient intellectual quality in the classroom, the Productive Pedagogies framework holds significant importance in assessing Malawi's Expressive Arts curriculum.

The dimensions of Productive Pedagogies and their indicators are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Productive Pedagogies dimensions, indicators, and guiding questions

Dimension	Indicator	Guiding questions for determining whether the indicator is present
Intellectual quality	Higher order thinking	Can students create new meanings by manipulating ideas and information? Is a critical analysis happening? To synthesize, generalize, explain, hypothesize, or arrive at a conclusion or interpretation, do pupils need to integrate facts and ideas?
	Deep knowledge	Does the lesson go into any depth, specificity, or detail to fully understand the main ideas and concepts?
	Deep understanding	Do the students' actions and answers demonstrate that they have a solid understanding of the subject matter?
	Substantive conversation	Does classroom interaction lead to further conversations about students' grasp of the material both between the teacher and the students themselves?
	Knowledge problematic	How much do students seem to be portraying knowledge as constructed? Are they critically analyzing texts, ideas, and knowledge?
	Meta-language	Are components like syntax, language, and specialized vocabulary getting more attention?
Connectedness to the world beyond the classroom	Connectedness to the world	Does the work, activity, or lesson address skills or issues that are applicable outside of the classroom in real-world settings?
	Background knowledge	Are the links to the pupils' past knowledge made explicit? Are attempts made to find out what knowledge the students already possess?
	Knowledge integration	Does the lesson cover a variety of topics?
	Problem-based curriculum	Is there a focus on identifying and tackling theoretical and/or practical problems for which there is no conclusive answer?
Engagement with difference	Cultural knowledge	When incorporating non-dominant cultures' ideas, languages, practices, and epistemologies, are conscious efforts made to take into account aspects like gender, ethnicity, race, religion, economic status, sexual orientation, or youth?
	Inclusivity	Are there attempts underway to increase the participation of students from a variety of backgrounds?
	Narrative	Does the teaching approach mostly use narrative techniques, or does it also make use of explanatory methods?
	Group identity	Does teaching in the classroom promote a feeling of identity and community among different groups?
	Citizenship	Are initiatives being taken to promote civic engagement?



Dimension	Indicator	Guiding questions for determining whether the indicator is present
Supportive classroom environment	Engagement	Are students paying attention, completing tasks, participating in group work, helping peers, and actively participating in class? Or are they disengaged, disruptive, daydreaming, or making noise?
	Student self-regulation	Do pupils have the ability to control their behavior, or does the teacher provide guidance?
	Student direction of activities	Do students get to decide the lesson's objectives, pace, or direction?
	Social support	Is there a positive and supportive classroom environment? Does the instructor convey to all students that there are high standards, and that they should be encouraged to take intellectual chances and work hard to achieve in difficult academic assignments? Is there a respectful exchange of ideas?
	Explicit quality performance criteria	Are there explicit standards in place for assessing students' performance across the board?

The Table 1 demonstrates how a key component of the Productive Pedagogy framework is absent: forms of content knowledge in a curriculum.

In African education, it is imperative that the "curriculum," which includes both instrumental and intrinsic kinds of information delivered, be examined and evaluated. According to Hugo et al. (2018), disciplinary knowledge is not something that can be taken for granted in Africa, unlike in Western nations where it may be. Based on the application of Bernstein's 'Knowledge and Control' theory to British education, Hugo argues that, in contrast to their counterparts in Africa, the majority of schools in Britain operate with adequate resources and staffing, despite notable differences in the quality of education across social classes. When it came to explaining how inequality was perpetuated in British schools—where curriculum content was often taught—Bernstein struggled. His answer mostly focused on the various pedagogical approaches and the dissemination of teaching and learning. If the message was largely constant, the disparities in how it was communicated might be traced back to similar formal divisions in social class as the cause of inequality. This theory offers a clear framework for comprehending educational abstractions outside of classroom conversations. Like McLuhan in the field of media studies, Bernstein emphasizes the value of both instruction and knowledge. McLuhan contends that a message's form, not its substance, is what molds students' awareness.

The "Forms of Knowledge in the Curriculum" paradigm developed by Moore and Muller (1999) was used in the current study to investigate the range of topic information that teachers can impart. Within this framework, different categories of knowledge that could be taught were defined by the distinction between instrumental and non-instrumental knowledge. According to Moore and Muller (1999), instrumental curriculum is substantial knowledge meant to provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to pursue specific vocations, acquire power or influence, or create beautiful or useful things, including concepts.

Knowledge becomes a tool in an instrumentalist curriculum, helping to shape students' growth through the process of teaching and learning while expressing and addressing the needs, aspirations, interests, and aims of society. This information is in line with what is thought to be the economic and societal necessities; hence, schools should be used as a source of practical knowledge while socialising students into the cultural norms of the workplace and society. As a result, instrumental knowledge is viewed as a tool rather than an aim in and of itself. Conversely, non-instrumental knowledge is seen as an end in and of itself; it is traditional subject discipline-based knowledge meant to develop a person's mind rather than just meet their financial needs or get them ready for the knowledge-based, globally competitive economy of the future.

Productive Pedagogies are used in this study because they are widely recognised as an educational theory that is used to evaluate curriculum implementation in classrooms. Instructors can improve the standard of instruction by learning insightful things about how the curriculum is implemented. The four dimensions of Productive Pedagogies—the intellectual quality of lessons, engagement with diversity, extension of lessons beyond the classroom, and fostering a supportive classroom



environment—allow for an effective examination of classroom practices and the promotion of high-quality education for all students, regardless of their backgrounds (Hayes et al., 2006).

All of the pedagogies that are essential to provide students with a high-quality education are thoroughly examined in Productive Pedagogies. As a result, it has shown to be an appropriate framework for curricular assessment.

Studies on Productive Pedagogies

Using the Productive Pedagogies method, Ahmad et al. (2012) carried out a noteworthy study that examined the activities of geography instructors in secondary schools in Malaysia. According to the study, Malaysian geography teachers apply the four characteristics of productive pedagogy poorly, which shows a lack of intellectual quality, connectivity, a helpful learning environment, and recognition of different activities. In their classes, we witnessed traditional, teacher-centered practices with little contact between the teacher and the students.

Ishak (2010) assessed Malaysian secondary school science teachers' classroom practices using productive pedagogies and found that they tended to use the method seldom. However, the classes that were studied showed notable behaviors that promote tolerance for diversity, particularly those that honor the racial and cultural backgrounds of the students.

Furthermore, productive pedagogies were employed by Hayes et al. (2006) to evaluate the instructional strategies of Australian instructors. The study discovered that Australian teachers' use of productive pedagogy was generally low, with the least stressed component being engagement with difference, or appreciating and acknowledging differences. Nevertheless, the lessons that were observed demonstrated a helpful classroom environment. This article summarises the findings of the study "An Illuminative Evaluation of the Practices of Expressive Arts Teachers in Standard 7 and 8 classrooms in Malawi" to provide background and context for the reinterpretation of productive pedagogies for utilization in Malawian and African contexts.

METHOD

As previously indicated, Malawi has implemented a new national primary curriculum (NPC). The purpose of this study was to investigate how the Expressive Arts learning area was implemented in six particular state primary schools located in Zomba. Twelve educators who teach Standards 7 and 8 and specialize in expressive arts took part in the study. All these teachers were qualified, aged between 34 and 52 years, and had 5 to 20 years of teaching experience. Five male and seven female educators who had all completed the standard curriculum for teaching expressive arts were included in the study. The study used a triangulation of data collection procedures involving various sources of data that included Expressive Arts curriculum documents review, especially the Syllabuses and textbooks, a questionnaire for teachers, lesson observations and post-lesson observation interviews. The primary data source for the study was the classroom observations. Two techniques were used to record data. A digital recorder was used to audiotape teacher's and learner's voices and field notes were made to capture what was done in the classroom. Key practices in the lessons were probed in the interviews. The results of the study were analyzed using the thematic content analysis method. According to Creswell (2018), this method is a way of analyzing data by organizing it into categories based on themes, concepts or similar features.

The study's main conclusion points to a general lack of data supporting effective pedagogies in lessons including expressive arts. More specifically, most lessons were of a lower intellectual caliber, marked by a preponderance of didactic instruction and few opportunities for students to think and engage in dialogue. All things considered, the implemented curriculum provided few opportunities for students to gain the information and cultivate the values, attitudes, and abilities needed for both successful competitiveness in other contexts and active engagement in Malawi's changing environment. It was discovered that the prevalent teaching strategies in Expressive Arts classrooms



direct students toward local concerns, exposing a clear discrepancy between the planned and implemented curricula.

Apart from the principal discovery of restricted productive pedagogies in Expressive Arts classes, the investigation also demonstrated that although Productive Pedagogies served as a useful supplement to Illuminative evaluation by enabling in-depth data interpretation and analysis, there were difficulties in utilising them to assess curriculum innovation, as evidenced by the evaluation of Malawi's recently implemented curriculum. This article suggests revisions to the theories to make them more appropriate for assessing curricular innovation in Malawi and other countries, beyond the theory's initial conception in Australia, taking into account the difficulties experienced in employing these conceptual tools. It is important to recognise the applicability of Productive Pedagogies theoretical tools in African contexts before exploring the suggested modifications.

Usefulness of the Productive Pedagogies Theoretical Tools in African Contexts

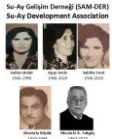
Dalle (2017) draws attention to the critical function that theoretical tools play in research by comparing them to the foundation that is essential to the construction of a building. Theoretical tools in research provide a framework for investigation, defining the parameters of measurement, and impacting the interpretation of findings. Dalle emphasises that judgments must be supported by accurate and trustworthy data gathered via thorough study for any system, particularly educational systems, to function effectively and efficiently. Research conducted in South Africa, including those by Blignaut & Au (2014), has shown the value of Productive Pedagogies theoretical tools when applied to African situations. Students actively participate in the learning process in multilingual South African schools by code-switching between their native language and English, for example, as revealed by the use of features such as group identities in a learning community. This realisation has led to suggestions that African educators embrace methods that align with the cognitive styles of their students. Likewise, the 'engagement' component of productive pedagogies has demonstrated how well the 'group work' approach conforms to African community norms by prioritising community building over individual success (Blignaut & Au, 2014).

Reframing of Productive Pedagogies for Use in African and Other Developing Countries

As was previously said, the impact of international dynamics and globalisation has led to an increasing convergence of ideas and practices that cross national boundaries, particularly those pertaining to education. The application of productive pedagogies in this study provides a notable example of how ideas are transferred from established to emerging countries. This idea, which originated in the developed nation of Australia, was successfully used to assess a curriculum in Malawi, an emerging or developing economy. As per Chisholm's (2005) perspective, ideas and regulations, especially those pertaining to education, can traverse multiple levels, ranging from the global to the national and vice versa, with adjustments made at every stage to accommodate regional circumstances. As a result, this research shows that although productive pedagogies were created in a wealthy country and proved to be mainly successful in an emerging economy like Malawi, they need to be reframed to fit the unique circumstances of developing countries in Africa and elsewhere.

Several challenges arise when evaluating curriculum innovation in developing nations, like Africa, when Productive Pedagogies are adopted, as demonstrated by the evaluation of the Expressive Arts curriculum in Malawi. The main issue this study found is that the content knowledge being taught is not sufficiently addressed by productive pedagogies. Aware of the vital role that knowledge plays in education, academics such as Young (2007) contend that schools exist specifically to support the development of knowledge. Young contends that granting pupils access to a variety of specialised disciplines of knowledge is the main goal of education. Young makes a distinction between two categories of knowledge found in curricula: theoretical, context-independent, and context-dependent.

According to Young (2007), context-dependent knowledge is procedural or practical and is acquired through resolving particular issues in day-to-day living. Examples include adhering to health and



safety laws (procedural) and being knowledgeable about how to fix mechanical or electrical problems (practical). Context-dependent knowledge focuses on details rather than generalizations or explanations when directing people on how to do certain activities. Conversely, context-independent knowledge is theoretical and aims to provide both a foundation for judgment and generalizations. According to Young, pupils learn this knowledge—which is independent of context—in school.

Young asserts that schools are essential in providing youth with access to knowledge that is frequently unavailable to them at home, in the community, or adult employment. To ensure that their children receive knowledge that is not easily obtained at home, Young contends that parents make sacrifices to keep their learners in school. He makes a point of saying that the knowledge covered in the curriculum gives learners fresh insights into the world along with trustworthy explanations.

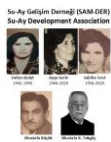
In Malawi, the Expressive Arts curriculum was evaluated using the 'Forms of Knowledge in the Curriculum' paradigm developed by Moore and Muller (1999), with an emphasis on instrumental and intrinsic knowledge. This framework sheds light on the content knowledge delivered by teachers. Consequently, the study advocates for an adaptation of the productive pedagogies framework to incorporate a segment on "curriculum," encompassing intrinsic and instrumental knowledge types, tailored for implementation in contexts of Malawi, Africa, and other developing nations.

Moore and Muller's (1999) paradigm on "Forms of Knowledge in the Curriculum," which focuses on intrinsic and instrumental forms of knowledge, was used to evaluate the Expressive Arts curriculum in Malawi. This approach aimed to offer insights into the subject matter or content knowledge conveyed by teachers. Consequently, the paper advocates for revising the framework of productive pedagogies to incorporate a segment on "curriculum," encompassing intrinsic and instrumental types of knowledge imparted, suitable for application in contexts within Malawi, Africa, and other developing nations.

On the other hand, a growing amount of research questions the presumptions in this statement. For example, a great deal of study has been done on indigenous stories in Australia and other places (Walter & Andersen, 2013). Researchers who work with indigenous stories have brought attention to differences in oral traditions and storytelling techniques across different communities around the world. The many tribes in Malawi differ from one another in terms of oral traditions and storytelling techniques. As a result, this component of productive pedagogy could not be appropriate for Malawian schools because learners from different tribes have varied customs and storytelling techniques, making it inapplicable as a universal pedagogy. Stories could work well at home, but they might not work well in a classroom setting. In contrast to the conventional expository technique, this article proposes redefining the term "narrative style" to refer to "interactive or participatory" teaching approaches in the context of Malawi, other African countries, and similarly underprivileged regions.

The characteristic of "engagement with difference" in the classroom was not well observed in Malawi during the evaluation of the Expressive Arts curriculum.

Hayes et al. (2006) observed that there were infrequent occurrences of the 'engagement with diversity' component in classrooms, which highlights another difficulty with this approach. The study's weak manifestation could be explained, in part, by the classroom's lack of diversity—all of the students were Malawian. Therefore, in its current configuration, this measure may not be suited for evaluating the quality of curriculum implementation in Malawi. The current paradigm encourages the inclusion of non-dominant cultures in the teaching and learning process and is effective in industrialised nations or Western surroundings. To be ready for active engagement in many contexts, learners in developing nations such as Malawi need exposure to a range of cultures, including both dominant and non-dominant cultures both inside and beyond the nation. Therefore, interaction with both the nation's dominant culture and those of other countries should be included in the "engagement with difference" factor for developing nations.



The new reframed dimensions of Productive Pedagogies and their indicators that applies to developing countries are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Reframed Productive Pedagogies dimensions, indicators, and guiding questions

Dimension	Indicator	Guiding questions for determining whether the indicator is present
Curriculum	Intrinsic forms of knowledge	Is knowledge taught as intrinsically valuable disciplinary or conceptual knowledge? Do teachers teach conceptual knowledge?
Curriculum	Instrumental forms of knowledge	Is knowledge taught as a means for practical, vocational, social, or economic purposes?
Intellectual quality	Higher order thinking	Do students need to manipulate data and ideas to come up with new understandings? Is a critical analysis process in progress? Do pupils need to integrate facts and concepts to synthesize, generalize, explain, hypothesize, or arrive at a conclusion or interpretation?
Intellectual quality	Deep knowledge	Does the lesson go deeply into its main ideas and concepts with precision, detail, and specificity?
Intellectual quality	Deep understanding of disciplinary knowledge	Do students' responses and work demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subject matter?
Intellectual quality	Substantive conversation about subject knowledge	Does classroom discourse promote ongoing discussion about subject knowledge between students and between teachers and students?
Intellectual quality	Knowledge problematic	Do students analyse texts, concepts, and knowledge critically? To what extent is knowledge presented as constructed?
Intellectual quality	Meta-language	Are syntax, language, and technical terms prioritised?
Connectedness to the world beyond the classroom	Connectedness to the world	Does the task, activity, or lesson relate to skills or issues that are relevant outside the classroom or in real-world situations?
Connectedness to the world beyond the classroom	Background knowledge	Are clear links created with students' prior knowledge? Are attempts made to find out what learners already know?
Connectedness to the world beyond the classroom	Knowledge integration	Is there cross-curricular integration in the lesson?
Connectedness to the world beyond the classroom	Problem-based curriculum	Is there a focus on recognising and resolving theoretical or practical issues that lack well-defined answers?
Engagement with difference	Cultural knowledge	Are conscious attempts made to integrate ideas, languages, customs, and modes of knowledge from other cultures, including dominant and non-dominant cultures?
Engagement with difference	Inclusivity	Are deliberate efforts made to enhance the involvement of students from varied backgrounds?
Engagement with difference	Interactive and participatory pedagogy	Does instruction actively involve learners through dialogue, demonstration, performance, collaboration, and hands-on participation?
Engagement with difference	Group identity	Does the instruction help different groups in the classroom develop a feeling of identity and community? Which perspectives about other communities are valued?
Engagement with difference	Citizenship	Are initiatives taken to promote engaged citizenship at local, national, and international levels?
Supportive classroom environment	Engagement	Do students pay attention and stay on task? Do they finish assigned work, participate in group projects, and help peers, or are they disengaged, distracted, or disruptive?
Supportive classroom environment	Student self-regulation	Do students control their behaviour, or does the teacher have the main say over how they behave?
Supportive classroom environment	Student direction of activities	Do students have any say in the direction, speed, or goals of the lesson?
Supportive classroom environment	Social support	Is there a positive and encouraging social atmosphere in the classroom? Does the instructor set high standards for each student and encourage them to pursue intellectual curiosity and mastery of difficult coursework? Is respect for one another prevalent?
Supportive classroom environment	Explicit quality performance criteria	Are the criteria for evaluating the full range of student achievement clearly defined?



Implementing the theme of "engagement with difference" in the classroom raises another challenge when it comes to assessing whose differences are considered worthy of support and whose are not, especially in African and other developing nation contexts. In reviewing Malawi's expressive arts curriculum, embracing diversity involved interacting with expressive arts from non-African cultures, particularly those dominant in the Western world.

This essay proposes a re-examination or reinterpretation of the 'engagement with diversity' factor in Productive Pedagogies, drawing on ideas from the research conducted in Malawi and other international studies, such as Hayes et al. (2006). Rethinking it might include narrowing the scope, especially in terms of identifying whose "difference" should be supported in the classroom and whose shouldn't.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This article argues that Productive Pedagogies should be reframed as conceptual tools for evaluating curriculum innovation in African contexts. The proposed reframing adds curriculum as a fifth dimension and revises engagement with difference to account more carefully for local, national, and international cultural knowledge. The revised framework can be tested and refined through further classroom-based research, including action research, teacher mentoring, and reflective professional development. A suggestion that Productive Pedagogies be reframed as conceptual tools for evaluating curriculum innovation is based on Bourdieu's (1974) perspective on the use of conceptual tools in research. This article argues that the Productive Pedagogies theory needs to be modified or reframed to improve its efficacy in assessing curriculum innovations. This holds particularly true when considering the distinct circumstances of developing nations, which diverge from those of developed nations such as Australia, where the theory originated. This is in line with Bourdieu's arguments regarding the application of conceptual tools in research study.

In addition, the paper suggests re-examining or reinterpreting the "engagement with difference" component of productive pedagogies to improve its accuracy, particularly concerning whose "difference" is considered deserving of support in the classroom and whose is not. The paper suggests adding a fifth dimension to the theory of Productive Pedagogies, called "Curriculum," which refers to intrinsic and instrumental forms of knowledge conveyed and is specially created for use in developing nations. This dimension will be reframed in conjunction with the "engagement with difference" dimension.

This is the case because the current paradigm of productive pedagogy does not concentrate on the subjects covered in the curriculum. As a result, the paper has suggested a new table with the indicators for the newly reframed aspects of productive pedagogies that apply to developing nations.

The proposed new five-dimensional model (including the Curriculum) can be tested and refined through action research in different schools.

Structured mentoring programs and reflective daily activities can be used to help teachers reflect these new "Curriculum" and "Difference" dimensions (reframe) in their classroom practices.

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Ethics and Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have adhered to ethical standards at all stages and declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

All authors made equal contributions to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, and writing of this article. All authors have read and approved the final version of the article.



Data Availability

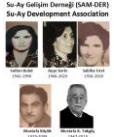
The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Corresponding Author

Correspondence to Precious NYONI, preciousnyonij@gmail.com

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