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Francis Sarr. *Community-Oriented Education for Health Professionals: A Cultural Analysis Approach to Curriculum Planning*. Banjul: CENMEDRA – The Centre for Media and Development Research in Africa. 193 pp. Year: 2018. ISBN: 978-9983-960-02-0

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In this book, Francis Starr tackles the issue of developing professional health education for community. His exploration of the topic through a cultural analysis approach clarified the challenges that health professionals face, and contributed to an in-depth analysis of the social, economic, communication, technologic, and moral systems of culture. Its reflection on the socio-economic and cultural needs benefit the content of Starr's analysis. Although this book provides a framework for curriculum planning for health professionals at the community level in The Gambia, it should be recommended as a resource for all health training institutions involved in curriculum development and teaching. There are some repeated parts that are either irrelevant to the main discussion or could have been shortened. Nevertheless, in my view, this book should be read by health professionals who desire to learn more and modify the types of approaches they adapt in their teaching practices in their communities.

During the past decades, there have been many arguments over the issue of curriculum planning. Educators debate whether curriculum planning is just a process of selecting and organizing specific knowledge or if the cultural context should dictate how curriculum is structured. Starr explains his support for the latter and he describes his vision for health professional education to extend the curriculum to include the interaction between content, process, and context. He then examines some educational ideologies that lie behind the term curriculum and how the matter interacts with classical humanism, progressivism and reconstructionism. This comparative analysis reflects the author's skill in highlighting the nuances in ideologies.

The book is presented in 10 chapters. For the sake of brevity, I will comment on some of the most important contributions the author made throughout the book. Starr begins by discussing the concepts and principles of primary health care, community health and population health. His overview effectively presented a comparative analysis between community health and population health with detailed definitions of the two concepts.

He sheds light on the curriculum planning models that are used in professional health education. Such models are classified into two distinct categories: prescriptive and descriptive curriculum models. The former is a subject – centered model that stresses the content of a course and provides teachers with free will to include other subjects in their courses. The latter is an outcomes- based model that encourages educators to set goals for their learners and develop “worthwhile activities” that students will benefit from. In his attempt to discuss the models mentioned above, the author suggests that educators rely on descriptive curriculum models due to their comprehensiveness and their multifaceted approach to curriculum planning. However, in his

discussion of the variety of educational approaches, there should be full identification of the types of models used and their purposes. For example, many experts suggest that in some professional health programs, a more technical scientific approach should be presented in early training before an experiential approach is used. A discussion on the consistency of implementations would have been beneficial here.

The author's cultural analysis is presented through a detailed example from the Gambian society. The analysis is highly meticulous and it provides the curriculum planners with a vision about what works best given the context in which systems are implemented. For example, the author argues that one of the challenges for developing countries is their economic systems whereas developed societies face other difficulties in their moral and belief systems. His cultural awareness is a factor that curriculum planners should take into consideration when designing or improving curriculum for health professionals.

He noted that the external influences along with internal limitations in the process of curriculum planning and curriculum design gave a deeper understanding of the obstacles in creating a successful educational program. Factors such as the community, traditions, professional standards, government policy, international bodies, and evaluation are interrelated and sometimes conflicting. Despite the fact that evaluation is one of these influences, it is essential in the process of curriculum planning as it is the tool that reflects the ability of students to achieve the objectives of the curriculum.

In chapter eight, the author makes use of Lawton ideas of the general principles for transmitting guidelines into a working curriculum. He focuses on comparing existing subjects with the process of curriculum planning for health professional education. The reviewer agrees with the author's concerns that despite the fact that the process of planning a curriculum in terms of the perspective of a health professional community - oriented educational institution through using the technique of comparing the existing subjects with the requirements of the eight systems might be time consuming, yet it is very beneficial in reducing the gaps of the curriculum.

Starr explores the issue of how to organize the common curriculum in light of the cultural analysis. He argues that curriculum planners need to identify the meaning of the common curriculum so that curriculum models have a foundation in certain subjects or disciplines. The author discusses Eraut's classification of knowledge, propositional, personal, and process knowledge and how curriculum can advance these realms of intelligence. To increase students' use of professional knowledge, curriculum planners can use multidisciplinary approaches in the curriculum process. However, designers need to be aware of what the author called the possible loss of the subject specialization of some teachers through integrated education. This leads to the author's point about how to manage curriculum innovation and change. With specific reference to the purposes of teachers and their collaborators in curriculum planning, he suggests implementing four components: rational empiricism, interpersonal relationships, responding to the opposing interest groups whom change is connected to, and the aim for a new model.

This book is pertinent to curriculum planners and designers who are willing to design curriculum for health professional adapting a cultural analysis model. Many parts of the book are highly worth reading and can enlighten readers with insightful ideas.

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