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An Instructional Design Model for Better Refugee and IDP Education

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Abstract

Education in refugee and internally displaced people (IDP) camps is out of the ordinary. Both teachers and students in these settings go through unimaginable experiences that need extreme measures to try to meet very basic educational needs as known in the fields of curriculum and instruction, and instructional design. This paper presents an instructional design model proposed for refugee and IDP education in Central Africa. It is based on a recent phenomenological study conducted in one refugee camp and one IDP camp in Central Africa. The paper starts with a synthesis of most common instructional design models that were part of a theoretical framework of a recent study on the lived experiences of teachers in refugee and IDP camps (Wa-Mbaleka, 2013). It briefly summarizes the findings of the study before presenting the proposed instructional design model.

Keywords: Instructional Design, Instructional Model, Needs Analysis, Teacher Training, Refugee, Internally Displaced People, Central Africa

Introduction

Educators and students in refugee and IDP camps face some of the worst educational challenges that one can ever imagine. Resilience seems to be at its peak in these extraordinary settings. Financial challenges, psychological trauma, dire poverty, security risks, lack of basic educational materials, health problems, just to name a few, are some of the challenges that both educators and students face in refugee and IDP camps. Yet, everyone expects education to be the golden key to secure a successful life of everyone in these settings (Drechsler, Munsch, & Wintermeier, 2005; Duong & Morgan, 2001; Lin, Suyemoto, & Kiang, 2009; Skonhoft, 2000; Sommers, 2001; Tillman, 2001; Waters & Leblanc, 2005). Although this expectation may be far-fetched, education certainly plays an important role in addressing past issues of refugee and IDP learners, their current life needs, and preparation for their future. It is therefore important to invest all needed effort and resources to support education in refugee and IDP camps.

One of the most important factors to consider in refugee and IDP education is the customization of the curriculum to the needs of the learners. Refugee and IDP learners have needs that differ from those of the students in mainstream schools. The instructional setting is also different from what most people know as school. For instance, according to the study on which the proposed instructional design model is based (Wa-Mbaleka, 2013), most

classrooms in the refugee and IDP camps have no access to very basic infrastructures expected from an ordinary classroom.

Based on the peculiarity of refugee and IDP learners and learning settings, it is important to propose an instructional model that would help meet better the needs of this special population. This population of learners is counted in millions, just in Central Africa alone (Wa-Mbaleka, 2012a, 2012b). What works in ordinary classrooms cannot be expected to work in refugee and IDP classrooms. Based on the findings of Wa-Mbaleka's (2013) study, an instructional model is proposed in this paper. This model draws from both the study and existing instructional models.

A Brief Review of Selected Instructional Design Models

A number of instructional design models have been developed over the years. Maybe the most comprehensive review of these models a decade ago was Gustafson and Branch (2002). Some others have been developed after this synthesis though (see for instance, Irlbeck et al., 2006; Morrison & Anglin, 2006; Morrison et al., 2011; Sims, 2006; Sims, Dobbs, & Hand, 2002). They all seem to overlap at one point or another.

Many elements of the variants of the ADDIE instructional design framework (analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation) are considered in the proposed instructional design model. Elements such as needs analysis, instructional design, development, and instructional delivery were evident in this study as seen in other instructional design models such as the ADDIE framework (Molenda, 2003), the USER Model (Booth, 2011), the BLAAM Model (Bell & Shank, 2004), the Morrison, Ross and Kemp Model (Morrison et al., 2011), the Dick and Carey Model (Dick et al., 2003), the ASSURE Model (Smaldino et al., 2012), the PIE Model (Newby et al., 2006) and many other models that have been developed over the years (Gustafson & Branch, 2002).

The ADDIE framework suggests that in the instructional design process, one needs to go through analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation of instruction. In the USER Model, proponents believe that the educator needs to understand the learning need, structure the instruction, engage students in learning before reflecting on the instructional delivery.

The BLAAM Model is simply an adapted version of the ADDIE framework. It stands for Blended Librarians Adapted ADDIE Model. In this model, the designer begins with assessing the needs, then moves into designing instructional objectives, developing and delivering the instruction, before measuring the instructional success (Bell & Shank, 2007). The Dick and Carey Model (Dick et al., 2003), closely overlapping with the previous one, takes the designer through identifying the goals, conducting the needs analysis, identifying the needs of the learners, writing the learning objectives, developing tests and instructional strategies, developing and/or selecting instructional media, developing and conducting both formative and summative evaluations.

In the ASSURE Model, the designer is expected to analyze the learners, state the objectives, select instructional strategies and tools, utilize the selected tools, require learners to take an active role in their personal learning, then conduct evaluation before including the revision. The PIE Model proposes three major phases of the instructional design process: planning, implementing, and evaluating the instruction. This is simply the synthesis of what is seen in most of the other models.

The Morrison, Ross and Kemp Model (Morrison et al., 2011) is based on nine major interconnected steps: identifying the need, examining the characteristics of the students,

identifying the needed content, stating the learning goals, sequencing the content, designing instruction, planning it, developing evaluation tools and strategies, and selecting appropriate resources.

Wa-Mbaleka's (2013) findings showed that a number of these elements are present in the instructional design practices of teachers of refugee and IDP learners. However, some components common to other models such as a systematic needs analysis, formative and summative evaluation, and instructional design maintenance were obviously absent from the instructional design practices of instructional designers by appointment (IDBAs). Additionally, some additional instructional design elements missing in common instructional design models are needed in the model that would meet the needs of teachers of refugee and IDP learners. Hence, the need for an instructional design model that fits better for these instructional settings.

Summarizing the Findings of the Study

In last year's study (Wa-Mbaleka, 2013), the main goal of the study was to explore the lived experiences of educators who teach in one refugee camp and one IDP camp. It was with the intention of understanding how education takes place in these settings, the role that it plays and the challenges that are common there. It was also and most important to try to understand how teachers there design instruction in those settings.

This study was a doctoral dissertation that used the qualitative phenomenological research design. It was based on interviews of nine teachers of refugee and IDP students, observations in the refugee camp, and analysis of instructional design materials (lesson plans and scheme of work) in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, two countries that host a significant number of refugees and IDPs.

Six major themes, on which the proposed instructional design model is based, became evident. First, the formal training that teachers receive is not enough to meet the instructional design needs of the educational programs of refugee/IDP students. This is true about needs analysis, instructional design, evaluation, and maintenance of instructional products. While they receive training in teaching in general, their knowledge of instructional design and delivery does not and cannot automatically apply to the peculiar instructional setting of refugee/IDP camps. Specific instructional design training is significantly needed in the areas of needs analysis, instructional design, formative and summative evaluation, and maintenance, to meet the needs of the unique student population. These results are an addition to the growing body of research studies and literature that support the idea that explicit training in instructional design is needed for effective and efficient instructional design process (Albi, 2007; Elkind, 2008; Kay, 2011; Norris, 2008; Parsons, 2008; Pérez, 2011; Silber, 2007).

Just as with the outcomes of previous studies, without specific instructional design training, teachers of refugee/IDP may not effectively and efficiently design instruction that fits well with the needs of their students. Lack of systematic needs analysis was evidenced in the summarized study. But this can be understandable with the fact that teachers of refugee/IDP students have never received any formal instructional design training.

Second, teachers of IDP learners need to adopt the instructional design process that teachers of refugee students are currently using. The well-structured process of designing the scheme of work and developing the lesson plan of the teachers of refugee students is a very good start for a suitable instructional design process. This instructional design process, however, must be improved by training teachers to conduct a thorough, systematic needs

analysis and take it into consideration in subsequent steps of instructional design and delivery.

It is possible that the ministry of education conducts some specific needs analysis when developing curriculum for the mainstream schools, although this was not reported in the interviews. The needs of refugee/IDP learners, however, are different and very complex. Because of the lack of adequate training, teachers are not doing enough to take care of their learners' needs in their instructional design. Instructional design research usually promotes specific instructional design process. This theme in last year's study was in line with the literature, especially in the case of instructional design for refugee education. For instance, a good number of studies have found that IDBAs cannot effectively and efficiently use instructional design strategies if they do not undergo systematic training (Albi, 2007; Elkind, 2008; Medina, 2011; Parsons, 2008; Pesce, 2012).

Literature shows that a complete instructional design model must include the following elements: needs analysis, instructional design, development, implementation or delivery, evaluation and maintenance (Baturay, 2008; Brown & Green, 2006; Cennamo & Kalk, 2005; Gustafson & Branch, 2002; Morrison et al., 2009). These elements should be part of instructional design in refugee/IDP camps if educators really want to meet the needs of their students. Teachers may all be trained in these instructional design steps or each school can avail itself of one instructional designer that will guide teachers in meeting all these instructional design requirements. Lack of needs analysis, complete instructional design, and maintenance of the instruction was unique to the research settings in this study. They were areas that need instructional design improvement.

Third, although teachers of refugee/IDP students have never received any systematic training on instructional design, they use a good number of steps of instructional design. Their knowledge is a good base on which instructional design principles can be easily added through additional training. Such training would help teachers understand why it is important to teach refugee/IDP in a different way and how to do so. The instructional design principles that they use are not complete and they do not fit well for their instructional setting.

Those principles that the teachers of refugee/IDP students are using are those that overlap between education in general and instructional design (Morrison et al., 2007; Orlich et al., 2013). Both teachers in general and instructional designers are trained in instructional development and delivery to a great extent. From last year's study, the overlap was seen in instructional design (through the scheme of work), instructional development (through the development of the scheme of work, lesson plans, and assessment activities), and instructional delivery (through the actual teaching of the prepared lessons). This finding was in line with studies that have been conducted in other settings where faculty members use some steps of instructional design, even when they have not completed formal training in instructional design (Albi, 2007; Chen, 2007; Elkind, 2008; Royal, 2007; Smith, 2009).

To improve the quality of education in refugee/IDP camps, more instructional materials are needed. Additionally, instructional design experts are needed to train teachers in systematic instructional design and help those teachers apply the new knowledge in their unique instructional setting – refugee/IDP camps. Financial means can be available to pay the teachers and build better infrastructures for the schools, but challenges will persist if proper training in instructional design for refugee/IDP education is not provided. Since they were conducted primarily in academic and business settings, previous research studies have not indicated the needs for instructional materials (Albi, 2007; Kay, 2011; Pérez, 2011; Smith,

2009). Some studies, however, have reported financial challenges in the implementation of sound instructional design theories (Parsons, 2008; Rowland & DiVasto, 2001).

Fourth, both refugee and IDP learners live with effects of traumatic experiences. This finding is common in the literature on refugees and refugee education. Many of the refugee/IDP are not currently receiving needed assistance. It is either because there are no funds available for this cause or because they do not have access to trained trauma experts. This finding has been consistent in literature over the past several years (Bates et al., 2005; Brooks, 2008; Clayton, 2005; Kirk & Cassity, 2007; Kirk & Winthrop, 2007; Miller, 2009; Tadesse, Hoot, & Watson-Thompson, 2009; Virtue, 2006). Teachers are not trained to deal with these issues either. While it is important that teachers receive some fundamental training on how to diagnose and deal with issues of traumatic experiences, government authorities and non-government organizations in charge of refugee/IDP education need to seriously consider integrating counseling services in the programs (Lin et al., 2009; Miller, 2009).

Fifth, results of the study showed that national programs are implemented in refugee/IDP education without any modification. Not much has been reported on this new finding. This is obviously the result of not conducting specific needs analysis of refugee/IDP learners and refugee/IDP instructional settings. Instructional design and development heavily relies on proper analysis of learners, their needs, and the instructional setting (Armstrong, 2003; Gustafson & Branch, 2002; Irlbeck et al., 2006; Morrison et al., 2011). The government must be more involved in and must support the work needed in customizing the national program to the needs of refugee/IDP students. The endorsement of the government to such modifications would make it possible for instructional design experts to be involved in training teachers on how to effectively design and deliver instruction to refugee/IDP students.

Last, the study laid the foundation of research on instructional design in refugee/IDP camps. This baseline study is only the beginning of research work that must continue in this unique instructional setting.

The Proposed Instructional Design Model

This model is based solely on instructional design literature and what was discovered from the experiences of the study participants from the two research settings. It draws significantly from both the ADDIE framework and the ASSURE model of instructional design. The proposed model comprises seven steps: Teacher Training, Analysis, Adaptation, Development, Requirement for Learner Participation, Evaluation, Revision and Maintenance. Although this model is based on some of the linear models of instructional design as discussed in Gustafson and Branch (2002), it is based on the assumption that some steps can be overlapping and completed in any order the instructional designer sees fit. Figure 1 presents the graphic display of the model.

Teacher Training

Teachers of refugee/IDP students are not formally instructional designers. They are designers by assignment. However, their work requires solid understanding of instructional design principles. Before they are assigned any teaching responsibilities, teachers need to have completed a degree in their area of specialization through teacher training colleges. But, since the teacher training colleges are there primarily for the preparation of teachers in mainstream schools, additional training is needed for teachers before they start teaching in refugee/IDP schools. In fact, refugee/IDP educational leaders should make such training

mandatory. They should make such training available to all new teachers in refugee/IDP schools.

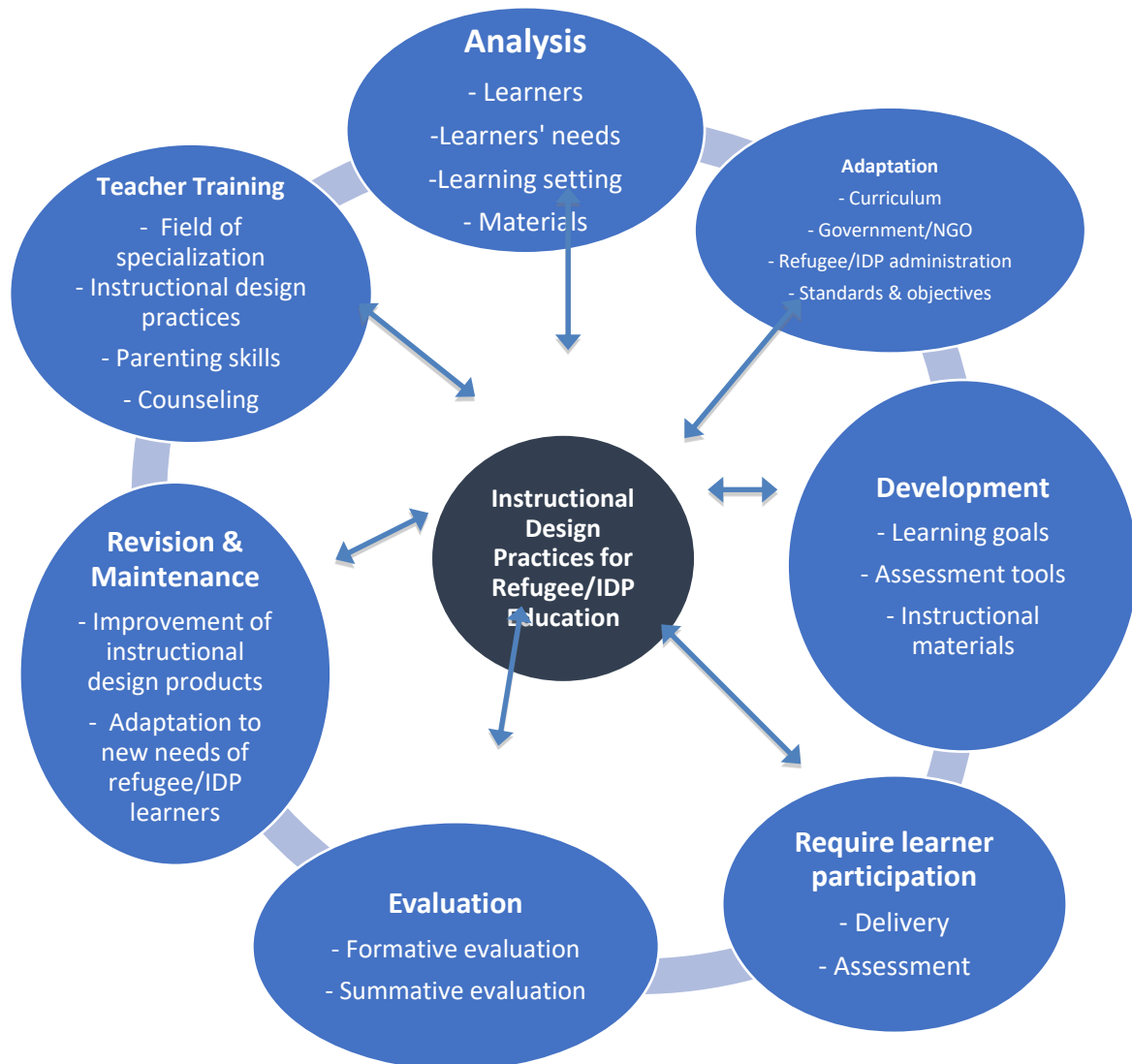


Figure 1. The Refugee-IDP Instructional Design Model

The additional training should focus primarily on curriculum adaptation for refugee/IDP learners, instructional design models, principles or guidelines to adapt instruction to the needs of refugee/IDP learners, dealing with needs that are unique to refugee/IDP learners, and conflict management. This training should be developed by the refugee/IDP school administration and/or non-government organizations that provide education to refugee/IDP learners, in consultation with and support of the ministry of education of the country. In fact, teachers of refugee/IDP students should receive an internationally recognized certificate of completion for such training. The office of the High Commissioner of Refugees could award this certificate after a teacher successfully completes the required training. Just as in other educational settings, however, the certified teachers

will need to continually update their knowledge through professional development (Blum, Yocom, Trent, & McLaughlin, 2005; Schlager & Fusco, 2003).

Two areas that need to be added to this training include parenting skills and counseling skills. The study showed that some teachers assume the roles of parents for the orphaned refugee/IDP students. In this study, three of those who reported this specific need were not even married and did not have their own children. It is important that they learn some practical and effective parenting skills to be able to help their students better. As for the significant traumatic experiences that many of the students have gone through, it is important that these teachers receive training in counseling. Counseling should therefore be a major part of the recommended teacher training.

Analysis

Both ADDIE and ASSURE begin with Analysis as the primary step to take in instructional design. Other than teacher training geared toward the instruction of refugee/IDP learners, Analysis is the most important step in this model. To design effective instructional products for refugee/IDP learners, a special emphasis must be placed on the analysis of the learners, their needs, their setting, and the needed instructional materials. The complexity of needs of refugee/IDP students makes analysis the most important step in the instructional design process of this peculiar setting. The needs of the refugee/IDP learners are dramatically more complex than the needs of students in mainstream schools. Without solid understanding of their needs, instruction may not meet the real needs of these students.

From the study, it was obvious that refugee/IDP students face various challenges with issues of cultural and linguistic diversity, age, traumatic experiences, and poverty, among others. Education must present some of the important solutions to their lives, not only at school, but also in their communities and personal life. Educators cannot provide such solutions and deliver effective instruction to these students unless they first understand very well what refugee/IDP students really need.

In mainstream schools, it is common to assume that students will somehow share the same needs. This is why instruction is designed well before the beginning of the school year, without even conducting any specific systematic needs analysis. The ministry of education, together with the school administration in refugee/IDP settings, must work hand in hand to try to analyze systematically the needs of refugee/IDP students. While all students are different, such an endeavor will be an important milestone to reach in preparation for the adaptation of the national curriculum to the unique needs of refugee/IDP students. This collaboration between the government and the school administration should include teachers of refugee/IDP students because they have firsthand experience with these groups of learners. Interviews could be conducted with the parents of the students together with the community leaders in refugee/IDP camps, since they all have good understanding of refugee/IDP children and youth.

When performing a needs analysis, the instructional designer must pay special attention to instructional materials and the instructional setting. In the case of the IDP camp, it was reported that students sit on rocks while they use their own laps to take notes. A systematic needs analysis will help the ministry of education notice these and other needs and give them a basis for providing more resources to meet the basic needs of refugee/IDP students. Additionally, proper diagnosis of refugee/IDP students' emotional, financial, physical, psychological, and social needs will help educational leaders and other educators meet better the needs of these students.

While a large-scale needs analysis is important in preparation for the curriculum adaptation for refugee/IDP education, it is equally important for teachers to know how to effectively and efficiently recognize and meet the needs of their individual refugee/IDP learners. Different students certainly have different needs, especially when considering the classroom setting. Receiving specific needs analysis training will raise teachers' awareness about students' special needs and provide them the needed skills to address these needs more effectively, efficiently, and professionally.

Adaptation

In the ADDIE framework, instructional designers are expected to move to the Design stage while in the ASSURE Model, the focus is on stating standards and objectives of the instructional design activity. Drawing from both models and placing them in the context of refugee/IDP schools, Adaptation of the instruction to the needs of the learners seems to be the appropriate step to take at this point. Unlike the work that has been done before, this adaptation must be intentional. It must be part of the systematic instructional design process for refugee/IDP education.

When needs analysis is not taken into consideration, there certainly cannot be any effective adaptation of instruction. It is true that the national curriculum must contain knowledge that is important to refugee/IDP students. However, the curriculum must be adapted to the needs of refugee/IDP students. The degree of modification of the national curriculum to fit better the needs of refugee/IDP students must be a decision from or endorsed by the ministry of education, in collaboration with educational leaders of refugee/IDP schools. This adaptation must take into consideration the results of systematic needs analysis of the refugee/IDP students, the instructional settings, and instructional materials.

Additional modifications of instruction should be done with the scheme of work and the lessons plans. Based on their additional training on instructional design principles, teachers of refugee/IDP learners should be able to modify their scheme of work and lesson plans accordingly. Instead of preparing the lessons the way they would if they were teaching in mainstream classrooms, teachers would now have to focus their instructional design and development on meeting the real needs of refugee/IDP students.

Development

In their current practice of instructional design, seven out of the nine teachers (78%) who were interviewed in the study described very specific steps that they regularly follow in developing instruction. These included developing learning goals, assessment tools (quizzes, assignments, projects, tests, exam, homework), and instructional materials (such as lesson plans and other teaching aids). All these are important instructional design activities that must be maintained in this model. In addition to these, however, teachers must be trained to work hand in hand with the school administrator in developing evaluation tools that will help the school evaluate the overall effectiveness of their courses (summative evaluation) and to recognize areas that need improvement in the course and programs that are offered (formative evaluation). This step was altogether absent in the interviews of this study.

One additional important element to consider in this step is to develop and sequence instructional activities in a way that can promote collaborative learning and connect new knowledge with students' past experience. Constructivism should be integrated so that students can construct their own meaning of what they are learning while connecting the new

knowledge with their past experience. Instruction must also cater to the needs of the different learning styles of the refugee/IDP learners. Organizing instructional activities that require students to use different strategies will most likely yield better results in the implementation of instruction.

Requirement for Learner Participation

From both the literature review (Bond et al., 2007; Drechsler et al., 2005; Hek, 2005; Kanu, 2008; Kirk & Winthrop, 2007; McBrien, 2005; Tadesse, 2007; Waters & Leblanc, 2005) and the findings of this study, it is clear that education provides hope for the future of refugee/IDP learners. It is therefore considered a safe haven for them. Learners should not be allowed to spend their time passively at school in refugee/IDP camps. They need to play an active role in constructing their own knowledge, which is an important factor in the success of their life in the future. Consequently, teachers of refugee/IDP learners must develop skills needed in effectively engaging their students in learning. Here, the recommendations from Richey et al (2011) are important. IDBAs must learn to design and deliver instruction, taking the following instructional strategies into consideration: cognitive apprenticeships, problem-based learning, scaffolding, and collaboration. These can be very effective in promoting and supporting active learning in the refugee/IDP students.

The study demonstrated that all nine teachers delivered instruction, although without observation. It was not possible to verify how effective their delivery methods were because the study took place during school break. Teachers must be trained in and must use effective classroom management strategies to facilitate meaningful learning to happen in the classroom. Instructional delivery must be interesting and engaging to the refugee/IDP students. This is one of the best ways to keep them focused, according to this study. Activities that foster collaborative learning and active learning, together with problem-based learning and discovery learning could be ways that teachers of refugee/IDP students use to deliver instruction effectively. Both formative and summative assessments must continue to be used to gauge the level of understanding and mastery of the new knowledge of the refugee/IDP students.

Evaluation

Both ADDIE and ASSURE promote evaluation as a component of instructional design. No evaluation was reported in the interviews of teachers of refugee/IDP learners. If the previous steps are carefully taken in the instructional design process of refugee/IDP education, then it is very important that the school administrators require and facilitate instructional evaluation to be able to recognize areas that are effective and those areas that need improvement in the instruction that is designed. The school administrators could develop some specific rubrics to be used for each scheme of work and each lesson plan, and/or some rubrics to be used at the end of each quarter, semester, or school year. Surveys could be developed for the same purpose. Such evaluation tools could be revised from time to time in order to meet very closely the needs of improvement of instruction.

Revision and Maintenance

The last element of this proposed instructional design model is the revision and maintenance of all instructional design products that teachers of refugee/IDP students develop. Both formative and summative evaluations should be followed with needed revision. Such revision helps continually improve the instruction.

Maintenance should be done at three levels. The ministry of education, in collaboration with school administrators for refugee/IDP schools, must regularly evaluate and implement needed improvements to the curriculum that is put in place for refugee/IDP educational programs. This first level may not be the priority of the ministry of education of a country. The second level includes the collaboration between school leaders and teachers of refugee/IDP students in regularly evaluating and updating courses to meet continually the needs of their students. This level of maintenance should definitely be incorporated in the work of the administration of refugee/IDP schools. Last, the teachers must do some maintenance work with the scheme of work and lesson plans on a yearly basis as new group of learners in each grade may require some level of adjustments based on the self-evaluation of the teachers and on summative evaluations from the learners.

Conclusion

Due to the many unusual situations that teachers in refugee and IDP camps face, it was important to propose an instructional design model to help meet better the needs of the learners. The proposed model considered other instructional models, which fall short of what would be ideal in these instructional settings. Previous instructional models together with the findings from research in one refugee camp and one IDP camp were taken into consideration to develop the model. While this model may not be completely new, it certainly provides a new perspective on how to provide better education to refugee and IDP learners through better accommodation and customization of instruction, and the proper training of the teachers. It is not impossible to see this model evolve to something even better in the future.

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