

Overview of Curriculum in High School

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ABSTRACT:

The curriculum is a document; a syllabus; a process for developing a plan it is the plan and the execution; it is a system; it is the structure of an undefined discipline. Its real meaning can only be found in social science concepts; society, culture, the nature of knowledge. Phrases like "planned learning experiences," or "a structured series of intended learning outcomes," emphasize either planning or teaching for what the student learns. Curriculum, moreover, is often understood as synonymous with the organization of the delivery of knowledge: the planning to teach. Schooling knowledge closely parallels the academic disciplines. Curriculum is thus transmitted through the levels of schooling-primary, elementary and secondary-by loosely defined age and grade levels. At one extreme, the curriculum is what is contained in school textbooks, with additions or deletions regulated by governmental agencies. Domains of social consideration also assume curricular importance, like safety, sex, drug abuse or multi-cultural education. But in general, the textbook industry, the mandates of government intervention, the organization of the schools, all determine the curriculum, and fix, seemingly unalterably, the curriculum content and process.

KEYWORDS: Curriculum, Design, School, Social, Knowledge

I. DEFINING CURRICULUM

The meaning of the word curriculum comes from the Latin *curare*, to run, and refers to the Roman races, sometimes done with horses and chariots, and often in dangerous and life threatening conditions. Some students may feel that schooling, like running a Roman race

course, is equally menacing. But in industrialized societies more than ninety percent complete secondary schooling without serious health impairments.

Curriculum writers and theorists are searching for meaning in the study of curriculum through definition. Curriculum has been defined as both content and process, as what is taught in schools, and as the process of deciding what to teach. Other cultural and social determinants are frequently described under the unhelpful genre of "the hidden curriculum," or as "sources" or "conceptions." It is an unfortunate state for an intellectual pursuit when few can agree on what constitutes the boundaries of the quest.

Definitions range from a written plan to the whole schooling process. The curriculum is a document; a syllabus; a process for developing a plan it is the plan and the execution; it is a system; it is the structure of an undefined discipline. Its real meaning can only be found in social science concepts; society, culture, the nature of knowledge. Phrases like "planned learning experiences," or "a structured series of intended learning outcomes," emphasize either planning or teaching for what the student learns.

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Donald K. Sharpes defines Curriculum as the teaching act. In this definition, the curriculum is not a plan, but the; plan in action. The curriculum is not a body of knowledge, but someone knowing what to teach.

Educationalist give their own different interpretations of the content and functions of the curriculum: The first concept enunciated by Oliver (1968) refers to curriculum merely as the educational programme consisting of three important elements, namely studies, activities and guidance. The second concept described by Philip Phenin, is based on a carefully thought out scheme of values which constitute the aims and objectives or purposes of education. The third concept given by Taba (1962) looks at curriculum as the functions of the public school. She lists

the three functions as preserving and transmitting of cultural heritage, serving as an instrument for transformation of culture and working as a means for individual development.

II HISTORY OF CURRICULUM

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It can be said that curriculum has a long past but a short history (Tanner and Tanner 1980). Although the concept of curriculum is implicit in the earliest educational prescriptions and programmes of all civilized societies, curriculum as a field of systematic inquiry emerged only during the early 1920's (Foghay, 1989).

Dewey's laboratory school established at the University of Chicago in 1896, and practice demonstration school which opened at the University of Chicago in 1901 exerted a powerful influence in progressive educational thought and practice. The emphasis given to curriculum unification and synthesis in both schools, consonant with the emerging findings in child development helped the ground work over the ensuing decades for child study and curriculum development as fields of university scholarship. A modern school, by Flexner (1916) orchestrated the theory of curriculum synthesis with the growing recognition of the need to modernize the curriculum in the light of developments in science industry, and aesthetics and the growing concern for democratic citizenship. Flexner's proposed curriculum gave rise to Lincoln school at Teachers college. Columbia University in 1901 through funds from the General Education Board of Rockefeller Foundation. Flexner envisaged the laboratory school as a centre for scientific curriculum research and development, an issue that was a plague the Lincoln school to the point of its demise thirty one years after it opened.

History of curriculum changes from Nation to Nation. In the post war years, education was widely acknowledged to be a vital asset that would bring important benefits to individuals, society and nation as a whole. In particular the promise of secondary education for all held out by education Act of 1944, was accepted universally not as a burden or luxury but as a national investment. As a right shared by all boys and girls upto the age of 15, the new secondary education was an integral part of the welfare state.

III. CURRICULUM DESIGN

Although "curriculum theory" and "curriculum design" are sometimes used interchangeably, the term 'design' usually refers to the basic organisation and plan for action for developing the scope and the sequence of subject matter. Designs as proposed may reflect a theoretical position, but frequently they are based on a single unitary principle, e.g. the structure of the disciplines taken separately, or the nature of society, or the needs and interests of students, taken as clues to the various stages of human development, or the learning process itself.

IV. CURRICULUM IN SCHOOL

Improbably and yet persistently, curriculum theory development, as opposed to the design of specific curricula, has been hampered by the way in which schools are organised to deliver the curriculum. Curricula are planned and staged in teaching subjects, fixed in time modules of uniform length, and prescribed in ritualistic fashion. The curricula have been embedded in the schools organization and are unrecognizable apart from the organization and the subjects which dictate their order.

Recall that in recent memory the manner of revising the curricula and rendering more flexible the alternatives for student learning was to recognize curriculum delivery: team teaching, flexible scheduling, differentiated staffing, open spaces. The working hypothesis was that if time, staffing patterns, and organizational structure in general could be more adaptable and responsive to change in learning styles, then learning-- as an expression of understanding the curriculum--

could be accelerated. Inconclusive and disjointed evidence resulted in further disillusionment, especially with the methodology controlling for the influence of the school as an organization and its changes.

Thus, rather than acting as a liberating agent, the curriculum has become a constraint. Once instituted as a plan, it becomes a part of the organizational structure of how learning is presumed to occur. Since so much has gone into the design, it cannot bear deviation without pain or anger from the logic of its order. The order of the design presumes and implies the sequence and the timing of what is to be learned.

V. CONCLUSION:

Curriculum is a conceptual scheme and a dynamic entity in the school setting. Therefore, many educationalists attribute many things to curriculum. In ancient societies need for curriculum was not acute, because the knowledge to be mastered was limited. But in today's context when the available body of knowledge is enormous and complex the curriculum has a vital role in the field of available knowledge.

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