

Free research paper about the definition of curriculum and its aims

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In my initial definition of curriculum, I talked about it being the academic content that includes the learning objectives and the standards for any subject to be taught in schools. The curriculum is a guide that enables teachers to teach any particular course. The curriculum must consider all teaching aspects such as lesson plan, assignments, books, tests, and all materials that are important in the learning environment. However, the curriculum should not consider the resources, or requirements of the learning environment such as money, space, or internet access. My definition of curriculum is strongly related to teaching and learning because learning in schools will occur successfully if there is a planned and formal curriculum, and it's implemented by teachers.

After going through this class and the course material, it is imperative to note that the curriculum making process is a highly complex endeavor and has a lot to do with everything that pertains to the teaching and learning process. It caught my attention that my definition of curriculum had to change and include some other aspects of the teaching and learning process I had not factored in earlier. The curriculum, therefore, includes among other things, the goals, aims and objectives of the teaching and learning process, as well as involving the educators and the school system. There are some factors that need to be included in the definition of curriculum too. There has to be an inclusion of the aims, purpose, goals and functions that need to be achieved in the teaching and learning process (Casey & Upton 2008). The difference between my earlier definition and the current one, therefore, lies in the fact that the second definition is all inclusive of other things beyond the content that needs to be taught, but also the intended objectives and

aims of the teaching and learning process.

Different theories have been put forth on the subject of curriculum and two among them are the functionalist and conflict theories. According to the functionalist theorists, schools are meant to socialize students so as to adapt to society politically, economically and socially (Feinberg & Soltis 2014). According to them, schools are an integral part of society and it enables continual survival of the same society. The school system in their argument is meant to socialize individuals and mould them to fit into the already existing practices and requirements (Henson 1995). As for the conflict theorists, the education system is supported by people in power in order to remain powerful in the social order of any given society. Naturally, in the world there are workers and bosses and whereas workers are used as the means of production, the bosses remain on top and reap benefits for their individual good and not that of the society (Cuff, Sharrock, & Francis 1979). Schools according to them, just train students to be consumers and not bosses because in so doing they will not pose completion to the bosses. According to Feinberg and Soltis, the functionalist theory forms the backbone for modernization and has been used very well in propelling educational reform (Feinberg Soltis & Schoonmaker 2009). When rewards are used in an educational environment, then there are high chances for motivation and this will lead to good performance. Reformers who use this theory insist that schools should always remain a resourceful place where educational opportunities should be offered. If everyone will be given an equal opportunity in life through the education system, then the fight against inequality and discrimination will have been won (Feinberg, Soltis &

Schoonmaker 2009). As a means of empowering members of the society, it is important to note that it is in the school where curriculum is implemented and offers individuals room to reach their goals in life and if the objectives of the teaching and learning process are met, then education and curriculum will have served their fundamental purposes.

The conflict theorists such as Karl Max were of the opinion that class does affect the chances of accessing education. But then this affects the entire education system as well as the curriculum in a number of ways. The ideas and content in the curriculum may in a huge way be impacted by the ruling class because it is they who will determine what is to be taught in the schools. And according to the theories of education, the curriculum content is influenced by the ruling class (Walker, Soltis & Schoonmaker 2009). It does not require physical force but then their influence is felt through a reward system that will also encourage them to work hard in order to be rewarded. The curriculum content, therefore, reflects on the objectives of the ruling class and not of the lower classes of people and that is how the social status has been able to be maintained through the years.

Noteworthy is the fact that these two theories have changed my initial perspective and definition of curriculum. There are practices that take place in schools that affect and influence how the education system works. The curriculum does not only center on the content and the teaching and learning objectives, but also goes a long way into other activities that take place in the classroom. The way in which a reward system comes in may be out of context but has worked in ensuring that the objectives and goals of the teaching and learning process are met. There is nothing as good as

having a system of education that motivates learners to work hard and achieve their goals in life (Seidman 2013). The motivation may not be considered as important, but then one gets to understand why test scores are important. It, therefore, becomes clear that aside from the content and the teaching and learning process, there is much to curriculum than meets the eye. It is for this reason that my definition of curriculum widened. My definition of curriculum has widened and now, touches on very many other activities in the school setting that influence how the teaching and learning process takes place. It is not enough that there is content and that, the content covers a wide variety of subjects, but then, there is more to just the teacher teaching, learners learning and meeting the objectives of a lesson. Aside from the resources, goals, objectives, tests, assignments, books and even the lesson plan, there are a lot more activities that make up the curriculum. It does not even stop just in the school setting, but goes into the political, social and economic status of the society. All the stakeholders are tasked to understand the meaning and relationship between the purposes, goals, objectives, development, implementing and even planning the curriculum. There is more to the curriculum than what is assumed to go on in the classroom.

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