

# Definition of curriculum

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Definition of Curriculum Ernie Miller Northcentral University Online Define Curriculum Curriculum is defined as an organized program of learning, which is separated by various subject areas. These subject areas are arranged into four specific categories: content, instruction, assessment, and context. The information and skills students are required to learn and should ultimately know by studying and processing the material is the curriculum content. The method by which the course content is taught to students (e. g. lectures and class discussions) is referred to as the instruction of curriculum. One vital aspect of curriculum is the assessment part of the curriculum. The assessment aspect of the curriculum is a vital element of the curriculum. The teachers/administrators use assessments (e. g. a variety of exams, oral presentations, research projects, or writing assignments) to measure the performance of students. The context of the curriculum describes the educational environment in which the course material or specified subject area will be taught. For instance, to fully comprehend the curriculum for an elementary school math class, the educator must reflect on the level of rigor for the elementary school students attending the class should be age and academically right. Larry Cuban, an educational theorist, argued that a well thought out curriculum should never be the only determining cause for deciding what should or what should not be taught by the teacher and learned in a school. Cuban implied that there are now four different types of curricula in place in today's school system (Teacher's Mind Resources, 2011). The four curricula defined by Cuban are: (a) the official curriculum; (b) the taught curriculum; (c) the learned curriculum; and (d) the tested curriculum. The official curriculum is the expected curriculum passed down

by state and district officials. Curricular frameworks and courses of study are in placed within the schools and the teachers are expected to teach the curriculum passed down by the officials. Likewise, the officials assume that the students will learn it. The curriculum that teachers actually choose to teach as they work by themselves in their classrooms is identified as the taught curriculum. The teacher based their decision on what to teach by their knowledge of the subject, experiences they have met while before teaching the content, their affection toward the subject area; which may include dislikes or likes about certain topics, and their attitudes toward the students in the classroom they face daily (Teacher's Mind Resources, 2011). Away from what is revealed by test scores about content learning, students also learn a variety of lessons that are not mentioned; lessons that are entrenched deep within the classroom's environment, lessons that may not be learned by merely listening to the teacher's discussions. These lessons learned by the students are identified as the learned curriculum. In the learned curriculum, the student process information in meticulous ways. This process may not necessarily be the exact way the teacher modeled the lesson to the students. The students will gather and understanding of not only the curriculum, but also how the teacher thinks. Through learned curriculum students learn how to imitate their teacher's attitudes (Teacher's Mind Resources, 2011). In addition, the students discover their own idea of respect for others from watching their teacher's display of respect or lack of respect for others. In learned curriculum, students learn when the right time to ask questions is, and when is not the right time to ask questions. They learn how to act as if they are paying special attention to what the teacher is

saying. The learned curriculum is a great deal more comprehensive than the openly taught curriculum. The tested curriculum echoes the idea that what is tested in the classrooms is only a small part of what is actually intended or passed down by policy makers (state and district officials), taught by educators, and learned by students. Teachers abroad find themselves in dark when it involves the construction of the tests. The less input the teacher have in the making of the test, the worse the correlation between the other curriculums and what the students will be tested on. Therefore, the administering of standardized tests over and over symbolizes the worst evaluation of the other curriculums. According to Teacher's Mind Resources (2011) the learned and taught curricula are for the most part disregarded in arguments of the effectiveness of schools. Nevertheless, in terms of what is best for the student, these two curricula may be the most important. Additional forms of curricula are the explicit and implicit curriculum. Educational theorist, Elliot Eisner, suggested that the explicit curriculum, which is similar to educational theorist, Larry Cuban's official and taught curricula, is a minute element of what schools actually teach. According to Stewart (2012) explicit curriculum is the curriculum that is intentionally presented as the fundamental material of teaching. Implicit curriculum involves all the rules, associations and depictions that contain the explicit curriculum. Explicit curriculum is usually identified as being the "official" curriculum. This curriculum involves the lesson plans that teachers must follow, as well as the order in which the lessons are taught and the goals that must be followed. Implicit curriculum envelops the morals and standards that are set in place by society and its' environment. Implicit curriculum deals

more with where the education is taking place and not what (teaching) is essentially taking place. Smith suggested that the environment does not affect the learning environment in explicit curriculum. The explicit curriculum deals with the subject matter and how the lesson is being taught. Thus the environment hardly makes any difference if the lesson or curriculum is taught in a regular classroom using traditional teaching methods, or in a classroom that is student-friendly where the class is conducted by faculty members who are trained in their respected areas of strength. Similarly, the implicit curriculum involves a more intimate relationship with the classrooms' surroundings or environment (Stewart, 2012). The null curriculum can be identified as what is deliberately left out by curriculum designers and teachers. According to educational theorist Elliot Eisner, What ideas, notions, and skills curriculum designers and/or teachers choose to not carry out in the curriculum is no less important than what they choose to include in the curriculum. The process in which educators and administrators decide what to leave and what not to leave out of the curriculum is based on two key factors. One key reason in determining what is taught and what is not taught in the classroom is based on the educator's personal belief. Educators have their own idea of what is important in regards to the curriculum. Their decision may be based on the time they are allowed to teach a particular lesson. Given that the teachers feel they do not have enough time to go over everything in their classroom, they choose which lessons or skills are important and which ones are less important. In the same way, if there is a lesson that the teacher feels more comfortable in teaching versus a lesson in which they feel they will be doing an injustice to

the students, they may place this lesson to side, or merely not teach the lesson. In addition, lessons that they. When considering the null curriculum, teachers also consider what is enjoyable or maybe boring to the students from previous experience teaching various lessons. Another key factor in determining what is left out in the curriculum is the current mindset, worldview, or pattern of environment or of the person (Teacher's Mind Resources, 2011). Certain aspects of a range of lessons may trigger apprehension in the classroom. Lessons that may allow mixed emotions to take over the real classrooms teaching (e. g. lesson about segregation, evolution, marriage, slavery, civil rights, or teenage pregnancy) which at one time were taught at great lengths, are now avoided because of the shift of today's culture and society. Instead of the teacher teaching entire lessons on these topics, little pieces of the lesson are taught to pacify the need of meeting the demand of the curriculum. These lessons are often difficult to use by administrators. There is no right or wrong answer many times with these types of lessons. The avoidance of the lesson creates an easy way out for the teacher, but creates a bigger problem for the student in the long run because the teacher neglected to speak on a subject that they considered to be problematic. References Education. com. (2012). Curriculum. Retrieved from <http://www.education.com/definition/curriculum/> Stewart, D. (2012). How do explicit & implicit curriculum differ? Retrieved from [http://www.ehow.com/info\\_11367407\\_explicit-implicit-curriculum-differ.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_11367407_explicit-implicit-curriculum-differ.html) Teacher's Mind Resources. (2011). What is curriculum? Retrieved from <http://www.teachersmind.com/Curriculum.html>