Importance of Effective Curriculum Development

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Introduction:

The area of curriculum is one of controversy, concern, and conflict. Without doubt, however, educational curriculum is one of society's foundational components. Over the past thirty years much of curriculum practice has been driven by theory (e.g., behavioral psychology) in which interaction between teachers and students has been defined in scientific terms like behaviorism or cognitivism. Such theory has driven a curriculum design process that starts with behavioral learning objectives, proceeds with content decisions, and finishes with instructional methods. However, while behavioral theory derives its credibility from scientific knowledge about human behavior, it does not penetrate the complexity of what takes place when a person learns something meaningful.

Finally, curriculum research should not be limited to research-to-practice strategies. The goals and strategies are included in the proposed framework. However, because they constitute one-way translations of research results, a model limited to research-to-practice strategies is flawed in its presumptions, insensitive to changing goals in the content area, and unable to contribute to a revision of the theory and knowledge on which it is built the second critical goal of a scientific curriculum research program. Instead, a valid scientific curriculum development program should address two basic issues effect and conditions-in three domains, practice, policy, and theory.

The society and culture served by an educational community dictate the needs, obligations, and responsibilities expected of the educational program. A traditionally accepted view of educational curriculum states that it (curriculum) is the information which should be taught with the underlying purpose of "standardizing" the behaviors of the society by educating the young in the traditions and rituals of that culture (Beyer & Liston, 1996; Borrowman, 1989; Glatthorn, 1987; Tanner & Tanner, 1995). Purpel (1972) proposed that the primary responsibility for the child's learning was historically determined by the parent, but as society became more complex, the needs for specialized training grew, necessitating more formal training. It is obvious, therefore, that the curriculum must meet the needs and current demands of the culture, the society, and the expectations of the population being served. According to (Dewey, 1929; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1994; Tyler, 1949,)

As a science, knowledge created during curriculum development should be both generated and placed within a scientific research corpus, peer reviewed, and published. Because scientific advances are ultimately achieved by the "self-regulating norms" of a scientific community over time, the goal cannot be to develop a single "ideal" curriculum, but rather dynamic problem solving, progress, and advancement beyond present limits of competence.

Definition of Curriculum:

The learning activities and experiences are not merely specific class sessions or courses but extend to or through the entire educational spectrum of a particular school or schools

Thus, curriculum may be defined as the sum of the learning activities and experiences that a student has under the auspices or direction of the school. Acceptance of this generic definition commits the curriculum developer to accept two additional supporting concepts. First, the central focus of the curriculum is the student. In fact, one may interpret this to mean each student has his or her own curriculum. This interpretation is a sound concept, since students often select courses, experiences, and noncredit activities that align with their unique personal needs and aspirations.

A second supporting concept has to do with the breadth of learning experiences and activities associated with a curriculum. Formal courses are not the only items considered to be a part of the curriculum. Learning and personal growth do not take place strictly within the confines of a classroom or laboratory. Students develop skills and competence through a variety of learning activities and experiences that may not necessarily be counted as constructive credit for graduation.

Various Parameters of Effective Curriculum Development:

However, it's recognized that from a conceptual point of view the ideal curriculum is neither "academic" nor 'career and technical. It should be included all three varieties. Even though career and technical education is included within the overall framework of education like

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curriculum building, maintenance, and immediate and long-term outcomes. Following are some parameters for effective curriculum development.

Orientation:

Although a major concern of career and technical education has been to provide a means for each student to achieve curricular outcomes, the ultimate outcome is more far-reaching than the educational process. The ultimate success of a career and technical and technical curriculum is not measured merely through student educational achievement but through the results of that achievement-results that take the form of performance in the work world. Thus, the career and technical curriculum is oriented toward process (experiences and activities within the school setting) and product (effects of these experiences and activities on former students).

Focus:

The career and technical curriculum deals directly with helping the student to develop a broad range of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, each of which ultimately contributes in some manner to the graduate's employability. The career and technical educational curricular focus also includes the integration of academic studies such as mathematics, communication skills, and science with applied studies so that students are better able to link these academic content areas to applied career and technical education content.

Dynamic:

Curriculum developers, and instructors must constantly examine the curriculum in terms of what it is doing and how well it meets student needs. Provision must be made for curricular revisions, particularly those modifications that are tangible improvements and not just change for the sake of change. This does not mean that once each year or so the curriculum is checked over by a panel of "experts." Provision must be made to redirect, modify, or even eliminate an existing curriculum any time this action can be fully justified. The responsiveness of a curriculum to changes in the work world has much bearing on the ultimate quality of that curriculum and its contribution to student growth.

Student-Oriented:

Currently there is a great deal of concern about how a curriculum can best meet students' needs. Various approaches such as team teaching and individualized instruction have been used by instructors to help meet these needs. But, regardless of the approach an instructor uses, a basic question has to be answered: To what extent will the approach actually assist students in preparing for employment? Another aspect of student orientation deals with the teaching-learning process. Not only must the curriculum meet group needs, but there is an obligation to meet the individual student's needs.

Realistic:

The curricular focus must be one that is relevant. Content is not developed merely on the basis of what a person should know but also includes what a person should be able to do. Career and technical curriculum content is typically based upon the actual worker's role with relevant tasks, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values serving as a foundation for what is to be taught.

Evaluation-Conscious:

Persons responsible for the contemporary career and technical and technical curriculum need to ensure that ongoing curricula are considered in relation to what will or may occur in the future. As decisions are being made about curriculum content and structure, thought should be given to the future results that might come from those decisions. Any curriculum that hopes to be relevant tomorrow must be responsive to tomorrow's as well as today's needs. The extent to which a curriculum is successful twenty, thirty, or even forty years from now will be largely dependent on its future-oriented perspective.

Conclusion:

The area of curriculum is one of controversy, concern, and conflict. Without doubt, however, educational curriculum is one of society's foundational components. As stated in the recommendations, while improvement is undoubtedly occurring in the taught curriculum via the mandated curriculum revision processes, there seems to be some doubt as to the long-lasting, substantive change in educational programming. Curriculum development focuses primarily on content and areas related to it. It encompasses the macro or broadly based activities that impact on a wide range of programs, courses, and student experiences. In fact, the curriculum should define the institution's mission and goals. Curriculum activities are typically conducted prior to and at a higher level than instructional development. In contrast, instructional development is more of a micro activity that builds on curriculum development through planning for and preparation of specific learning experiences within courses.

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