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BSBN	Edu20180002
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Title	Nature Of Curriculum
Keywords	
Description	Term Paper For The Course CIT831 (Curriculum Theory, Design And Implementation)
Category	Education
Publisher	
Publication date	

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY,

FACULTY OF EDUCATION,

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY,

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QUESTION: NATURE OF CURRICULUM

COURSE TITLE: CURRICULUM THEORY, DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

COURSE CODE: CIT831

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What is nature?

Nature is the characteristics of a thing, what something will tend to do by its own constitution.

What is curriculum?

Curriculum is a deliberate, systematic and planned attempt undertaken by the school to modify or change the behaviors of the citizens of a particular society.

Nature of Curriculum in School

An expert in curriculum called Tyler (1949) was among the first to suggest four fundamental questions which must be answered when talking about the nature of curriculum in schools: These are:

1. What educational purpose should the school seek to attain (Objectives);
2. What educational experiences can be provided to attain these purposes? (i.e. the activities, the subject-matter etc);
3. How can these educational experiences be organized effectively to achieve these purposes? (e.g. Teacher-centered or child-centered learning);
4. How can we determine whether or not the expected objectives have been achieved? (i.e. using tests, performance observations and other forms of evaluation).

These four fundamental questions form the core of the curriculum development process. By its very nature therefore curriculum cannot be said to have been presented until objectives, contents evaluation procedures are clearly specified

What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?

Educational objectives/purposes are the starting point to selecting things such as material selection, content outline, development of instructional procedures and test and examination preparation.

✓ **Studying the Learners:**

- ✓ A study of the learners themselves would seek to identify needed changes in behavior patterns, which the school should seek to produce.
- ✓ One of the problems of education is to channel a means by which needs are to be met so that resulting behavior is socially acceptable and no unrelieved tension exists.
- ✓ It is unnecessary for the school to duplicate educational experiences already adequately provided outside of the school.

Studying Contemporary Life Outside of School:

- ✓ If studies of contemporary life are used to indicate directions in which educational objectives may aim, while the choice of particular objectives for given children takes into account student interests and needs, these studies of contemporary life can be useful without violating relevant criteria of appropriateness for students of particular age levels.
 - ✓ It is necessary to divide life outside of school into various phases in order to have manageable areas to investigate.
 - ✓ No single classification of aspects of life is satisfactory as a whole.
 - ✓ Some ways to study the contemporary life outside of school would be to study the student's health, religion, family or recreational activities.
- ✓ **Subject Specialist:**
- ✓ Textbooks are usually written by subject specialists and will reflect their views.

✓

What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?

- ✓ Learning is said to take place through experiences that the learner has such as reactions the student makes to the environment in which he/she is placed. The means of education are educational experiences that the learner has had. The essential means of education are the experiences provided, not the things to which the student is exposed.

✓

✓ **General Principles in Selecting Learning Experiences:**

- ✓ For a given objective to be attained, a student must have experiences that give him/her an opportunity to practice the kind of behavior implied by the objective.
 - ✓ The learning experience must be such that the student obtains satisfaction from carrying on the kind of behavior implied by the objectives.
 - ✓ The reactions desired in the experience are within range of possibility for students involved.
 - ✓ There are many particular experiences that can be used to attain the same educational objectives.
- ✓ The same learning experience will usually bring about several outcomes.

• **Illustrations of the Characteristics of Learning Experiences Useful in Attaining Various Types of Objectives:**

1. Learning experiences to develop skill in thinking.

- ✓ Learning experiences to develop thinking will utilize various problems that are real to students in order to stimulate their reaction.
 - ✓ Inductive thinking involves drawing generalizations from several items of specific data.
 - ✓ Deductive thinking involves applying one or more generalizations to specific areas.
 - ✓ Logical thinking involves the arrangement of assumptions, premises and conclusions in a way to develop a logical argument.
2. Learning experiences helpful in acquiring information.
- ✓ Developing understanding of particular things and developing knowledge about various things.
 - ✓ The kind of information acquired includes principles, laws, theories, experiments and evidence supporting generalizations such as ideas, facts and terms.
3. Learning experiences helpful in developing social attitudes.
- ✓ Objectives that can be classified as developing social attitudes include the ones emphasized in the social studies, literature, arts, physical education and extracurricular activities.
 - ✓ Attitudes is defined as a tendency to react even though the reaction does not actually take place.
 - ✓ There are three means by which attitudes commonly develop in people:
 - assimilation from the environment
 - emotional effects of certain kinds of experiences
 - traumatic experiences

How can these educational experiences be effectively organized to achieve its purpose?

Organization of educational experiences is to produce a cumulative effect, they must be so organized that they reinforce each other. Relationships of educational experiences can be examined over time and from one area to another. Relationships are vertical when you compare two of the same courses but from different grade levels. Relationships are horizontal when you compare two different courses from different grade levels.

- **Criteria for Effective Organization:**

There are three criteria that need to be met when you are trying to build an effectively organized group of learning experiences:

- ✓ Continuity, which is the vertical reiteration of major curriculum elements.
- ✓ Sequence, which is a criterion emphasizing the importance of having each successive experience build upon the preceding one but to go more broadly and deeply into the matters involved.
- ✓ Integration, which is the horizontal relationship of curriculum experiences.

Planning a Unit of Organization

- ✓ Planning must be carried out while the units are being used
- ✓ There is value in having the students participate in the planning with the teacher:
 - student has a greater understanding and meaning of their learning experience
 - increases the likelihood of motivation

- ✓ Suggestions of activities will be made from what appears in the source unit as a suggestion

How can we determine if these purposes are being attained?

- **The Need for Evaluation**

It is important to check that the plans for learning experiences are functioning to guide the teacher in producing the outcomes that are desired, which is the purpose for evaluation. The process of evaluation is necessary after the plans are developed. The process of evaluation will involve identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the plans. As a result of evaluation, it is important to note what within the curriculum is effective and what needs improvement.

- **Basic Notions Regarding Evaluation**

- ✓ Evaluation must appraise the behavior of students since it is change in these behaviors which is sought
- ✓ Evaluation must involve more than a single appraisal at any one time at an early point and later point to see if a change has taken place.
- ✓ It is also necessary to have another appraisal after the completion of the instruction.
- ✓ Any valid evidence about behaviors that are desired as educational objectives will provide an appropriate method for evaluation beyond paper and pencil tests.
- ✓ Evaluations can include the following:
 - ✓ observation
 - ✓ questionnaire
 - ✓ collection of products made by students

✓ sampling of reactions to tasks

- **Using the Results of Evaluation**

- ✓ It is important to compare the results obtained from several evaluation instruments before and after given periods in order to estimate the amount of change taking place
- ✓ It is necessary to examine data from strengths and weaknesses to suggest possible explanations or hypotheses about the reason for that pattern of strengths and weaknesses
- ✓ It is necessary to compare any hypotheses to any previous ones to see if they are consistent
- ✓ When consistency is determined then the next step is to modify the curriculum based on conclusions and then to teach based on modifications to see if student achievement is improved

CONCLUSION

In conclusion to determine the nature of curriculum, four things are needed to be put into consideration

What educational purpose should the school seek to attain(Objectives),what educational experiences can be provided to attain these purposes, How can these educational experiences be organized effectively to achieve these purposes? (e.g. Teacher-centered or child-centered Learning) and how can we determine whether or not the expected objectives have been achieved.

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