

Curriculum

Meaning:

Curriculum is the courses offered by an educational institution. The term curriculum has been used with quite different meanings ever since the field took form. The term 'curriculum' has been derived from a Latin word 'currere' which means a 'racecourse' or a runway on which one runs to reach a goal. Accordingly, a curriculum is the instructional and the educative programme by following which the pupils achieved their goals, ideals and aspirations of life. It is curriculum through which the general aims of a school education receive concrete expression.

Traditional Concept of Curriculum

In the past, the second name of curriculum was 'course of studies.' This term was a program related to various subjects only. However, the term 'curriculum' and 'course of studies' was, sometimes interchangeable but used in a very limited sense. As a matter of fact, this viewpoint was a static view which emphasised only the textbook knowledge or factual information. In those it was correct because the main objective of education was to help the learner to memorize the contents. Furthermore, curriculum was a body of preserved factual knowledge to be transmitted from the teacher to the pupils and mastered by them through memorization, recitation and drills; and to be reproduced on the demand of the teacher. The traditional curriculum was subject centred while the modern curriculum is child and life-centred or student centred.

Modern Concept of Curriculum

With the passes of time and reinforcement of mind the traditional concept of curriculum was replaced by a dynamic and modern concept. Hence, it is now considered to be a broad cumulative and comprehensive term including all the curricular and co-curricular activities. It is the totality of all the learning activities to which we are exposed during study, i.e. classroom experiences, laboratory, library, playgrounds, school building, study tours associations with parents and community. Now, it is more than the textbooks, and more than the subject matter selected for a particular class.

Modern education is the combination of two dynamic processes. The one is the process of individual development and the other is the process of socialisation, which is economically known as adjustment with the social environment.

In short, curriculum is a series of potential experiences, set-up in educational institutions for the reason of disciplining the learners in desirable ways of thinking of the concerned society. It is a path by following which we can reach a specified destination. Furthermore, it is a series of learning opportunities which are planned and carried out by a teacher and pupils working together.

Principles of curriculum construction:- The principles of curriculum construction are the underlying guidelines that affect the development and design of a curriculum. These principles serve as a framework to ensure that the curriculum is effective, relevant, and meaningful to the learners.

1. **Alignment with learning goals:** The curriculum should be aligned with specific learning goals that are relevant and meaningful to the learners. These goals should be well-informed and communicated to the learners and teachers.
2. **Relevance and authenticity:** The curriculum should be relevant and authentic to the learners' lives and experiences. It should be designed to connect with the learners' interests, culture, and background.
3. **Flexibility and adaptability:** The curriculum should be flexible and adaptable to meet the changing needs and interests of the learners. It should be designed to accommodate different learning styles and preferences.
4. **Collaboration and participation:** The curriculum should encourage collaboration and participation among learners, teachers, and other stakeholders. It should provide opportunities for learners to take an active role in their own learning and contribute to the design and development of the curriculum.
5. **Continuous improvement:** The curriculum should be continuously evaluated and improved based on feedback from learners, teachers, and other stakeholders. This process should be ongoing and dynamic and should aim to improve the effectiveness and relevance of the curriculum.
6. **Integration of technology:** The curriculum should be designed to integrate technology effectively to enhance learning outcomes. This includes the use of digital

resources, online platforms, and other forms of technology to support and enhance the learning experience.

Overall, the principles of curriculum construction aim to ensure that the curriculum is relevant, meaningful, and effective in achieving specific learning goals. These principles emphasize the importance of alignment, relevance, flexibility, collaboration, continuous improvement, and the integration of technology to create a dynamic and effective curriculum.

Approaches to curriculum construction- Approach to curriculum is a design for deciding the various aspects of curriculum development and transaction. It is a planned or pattern of organization that the teachers follow in providing learning experiences to the learners. There are different types of approaches to curriculum construction, and a few are discussed below:

- Activity centred,
- Learner centred
- Integrated
- holistic

Activity-centred Curriculum: - Some experts view curriculum "as various forms of activity that are grand expression of the human spirit and that are of the greatest and most permanent significance to the wide world". According to activity-centred curriculum students, should learn by engaging themselves in various activities which is desirable and purposeful. It stresses the practical aspects of life. Emphasis is given on "learning by doing" and "learning by relating to life". Laboratory work and field work are given more importance. Activity-centred curriculum may consist of activities such as making a dress, constructing a box, building a miniature house, etc. The activities become the focus (rather than the fixed content), which are intended to achieve the pre-stipulated objectives.

Learner Centred Curriculum:- In learner-centred curriculum, the learner occupies the central position in the teaching-learning exercise. Stress is given on the all-round development of the learner. Provision is made for the varying abilities and interests of learners. They have choices and options to fulfil their needs and interests. The learner-centred curriculum is based on the psychological foundations of education. Subject-matter and objectives are identified with the cooperation of or in collaboration with the learner. Importance is given to the 'process' of acquiring knowledge or facts, rather than simple acquisition of knowledge. Attempt is made to

orient selection of content and teaching-learning towards every individual child, based on his/her abilities, interest, aptitude and learning styles.

Integrated Curriculum: - Integrated curriculum involves judicious mix of subject-centred, learner-centred and activity-centred curriculum. It enables the students to get a comprehensive view of the concepts to be learnt. For example, a course like "History of Civilization" may be an integrated curriculum representing history, literature, art, music, and sociology. The traditional curriculum is too much formal, fragmented and isolated. As a result it fails to give a comprehensive view of life. It does not lead to unity of knowledge. Introduction of integrated curriculum overcomes such barriers.

Holistic Curriculum: - The Holistic approach integrates all developmental areas in an environment that is carefully designed to encourage discovery and exploration. Classroom materials allow children to interact with the world familiar to them. A unifying project focus (theme) that is interesting to the children connects learning experiences across all developmental areas to form a developmental web. This integration of developmental areas results in children reaching higher levels of thinking. This approach carefully balances the opportunity for children to initiate play and learning activities and the responsibility of the teacher to optimize children's development by challenging and supporting their learning.

A more authentic curriculum emerges when all developmental areas are creatively integrated in a natural way rather than artificially inserting developmental activities for the sake of including each area. Project themes that are broad are the best guarantee for the holistic approach. Not every focus lends itself to all development areas, while others are well suited for certain development areas. For instance, a focus built around the supermarket offers a natural springboard for mathematical activities. A focus built around the clothing we wear easily lends itself to activities involving language concepts. Language has a double function as both a learning tool and as a learning goal. Therefore, language activities must have an extra place in all projects focuses based around a network of concepts.

learner centred approach for curriculum development

It is a method of teaching that shifts the focus of instruction from teacher to the student. Here the aim is to develop the independence of the learner by making learner active in his learning path. It focuses on skills that enable lifelong learning and independent problem-solving. This

learner-centred approach is based on constructivist learning theory that put emphasis on learner's role in constructing meaning from new information and prior experiences. In Learner-centred curriculum approach, students choose what they will learn, how they will learn and how they will assess their own learning. Here students take a more active role. So, student-centred learning requires the student to be active, responsible participants in their own learning and with their own pace of learning. Here the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning for individuals rather than for the class.

importance in learner centred approach

The curriculum provides a lot of help and assistance to the learners.

- The curriculum gives students a written detail about the types of learning experiences they need to acquire for completing the expected learning objectives.
- The curriculum makes them familiar with the learning objectives. This way it makes the tasks of learning purposeful and goal oriented. This purposefulness makes them motivated towards learning as they are aware of the types of behavioural changes expected as learning outcome from the study of a particular subject or doing a certain activity to complement learning.
- A properly developed curriculum is accompanied by the resource materials needed to supplement it. These resources include suggested experiments, learning activities, projects, assignments, references etc. These materials are equally important for both teachers and learners.
- A curriculum is a properly developed framework of the teaching-learning process. It includes learning objectives that should be known to the learners. When learners are aware of the learning objectives they can plan, execute and evaluate them for the realization of the learning outcome of the course being studied.
- Hence a properly developed curriculum can help the learner in their learning process from beginning to end for the realization of the set learning objectives.
- Realization of these learning objectives results in overall growth and development in all the aspects and dimensions of their personality.

Basics of learner centred approach

Following are the basic issues of learner centred approach or learner driven approach: -

- In this approach students clearly, express learning goals that are related to their real-life roles. So students help in the planning of curriculum.
- It builds on what learners already know. This approach is relevant to the student's real-life context.
- Learner driven approaches draw upon constructivism. Constructivism is a theory of learning in which people learn when they relate new information and skills to what they already know, actively practice new information and get feedback on their performance.
- In this approach, learners construct their own understanding from what they are exposed to in the classroom and what they have experienced in the rest of their lives.
- To develop learner centred curriculum, the teacher needs to view learners as active inquirers who use previous experiences (both mental and social) to make meaning of the world.

Advantages of learner centred approach

1. This approach to curriculum gives power to learners.
2. Students see their needs clearly reflected in the classroom, which is very motivating.
3. It creates a direct link between classwork and the learner's needs.
4. Learners can easily transfer new skills in day-to-day activities.
5. It encourages learner's persistence.

Disadvantages of learner centred approach

1. It often relies on the teacher's ability to create materials appropriate to learner's expressed needs.
2. It requires more skill on the part of the teacher as well as their time and resources.

3. It is often difficult for teachers to make an acceptable balance among competing needs and interests of students.
4. In terms of man, material and resources this approach could be a luxury that learners often cannot afford.

