

## UNDERSTANDING CURRICULUM

*by:*

**Dennesse Anne M. Martinez**

*Teacher III, Morong National High School*

The curriculum indeed plays a very important role in facilitating learning as this holds the complete framework of what needs to be accomplished in hopes of delivering quality education. Therefore, curriculum formulation is very crucial because of the purpose it well serves not only for the teachers but for the whole stakeholders, hence every aspect of it should be considered and highly considered.

Since objectives are the most important criterion for directing all other actions of the curriculum creator, Schiro (2013) noted in his book that Social Efficiency educators spend a lot of time putting them up and formulating them in the early stages of curriculum construction. (Curriculum Theory; Conflicting Visions and Enduring Concerns, p. 58)

At present, high emphasis is given to curriculum intent as an important element in the curriculum, which is greatly influenced by the philosophy of education, socio-cultural context, theories of learning, and demands of industries.

Aside from the formulation of objectives of a curriculum, there are also other things that need to be considered in the curriculum process which includes planning based on different levels of the curriculum. These levels are namely societal, institutional, instructional, and experiential. Each level should be given due importance as they are vital to the success of a curriculum.

The community is one aspect of the societal level that greatly participates in identifying and setting up goals of a curriculum. Other public stakeholders that work

hand in hand in the same pursuit are government or the politicians in the community, special interest groups, administrators, and professional specialists.

According to Glatthorn, et al. (2012), community participants for curriculum change are stakeholders who are viewed as either (a) attempting to influence the allocation of resources or intended direction of a curricular program, or (b) having an interest or stake in the resolution of an actual or potential conflict over a curricular program. Realistically, understanding the stakeholder may revolve around power, yet stakeholders other than professional educators are frequently denied real authority's (Curriculum Leadership: Strategies for Development and Implementation, p. 162)

The norms of the community and its valuable members should specifically be recognized in deciding what should be incorporated into the curriculum especially if sensitive issues are to be weighed.

In order to build a district health curriculum, Glatthorn, et al. (2012) argued that including sex education in the curriculum will inevitably lead to conflict in the community. In this case, the curriculum director should formulate a committee that includes a member of the clergy, a nurse, and a mother and baby out of wedlock. The district committee for the health curriculum included representatives from the various grade levels- elementary, middle, and high school. Sex education issues were openly discussed with strong participation from community members. The final product was a health curriculum that covered sex education and was approved by the community as well as the invited and well-respected participants (p. 163). Adding sex education as a subject in the Philippine school system has always been a very delicate matter, and it still is.

The addition of sex education as a subject in the Philippine educational system has been a very sensitive issue and it still is today. There are many different views aired and stated about the subject and the problem on it is still yet to be concluded. This is one valid

example of why the norms of the community are recognized and considered as well as the views of the people.

However, Glatthorn and company also work with other important members of the community who will support curriculum development. The creation of a district-wide curriculum advisory council, whose members would be nominated by the superintendent of schools, was suggested in their book. The principal of the secondary school, the principal of the elementary school, teachers, parents, and other community representatives, as well as secondary school students, should all be represented on the committee, however, its makeup will vary depending on the size of the school district (p. 161). Furthermore, curriculum models must be made explicit because this is how instruction should be set up.

It is a common belief that change is the only constant thing in the world and this is highly observable in the education system. The behavior of students drastically changed with the influence of the information age, and this has made a huge impact on students' behavior towards learning. Thus, there are some necessary adjustments and modifications to meet the changing learning style of 21st-century students.

Bishop (2011) said in her book that the emphasis on student learning has taken the place of teacher-centered learning in modern society. She added that while learning is the primary goal of all schools, educational reform has emphasized the importance of authentic and relevant learning (Connecting Libraries with Classrooms: The Curricular Roles of the Media Specialist, p. 2).

At present, teachers in the country are starting to deviate from the traditional way of teaching of doing more of the talking. Teachers nowadays have started incorporating certain theories that aim for the active involvement of students in the learning process.

Bishop (2011) explained that the Constructivist Educational Theory has been instrumental in the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. Bishop

presented five principles evident in constructivist classrooms which are seeking and valuing students' points of view, challenging students' suppositions, posing problems of emerging relevance, building lessons around primary concepts and big ideas, and assessing students learning in the context of daily teaching.

Moreover, Drake (2012) substantiated 21st Century learning by writing in her book that one of the best ways to understand general developments in the curriculum is to examine trends in the specific subject areas. While innovations transcend the discipline, most of the important changes take place and are worked out in the subject areas themselves (Creating Standards-Based Integrated Curriculum, p. 384).

There are also certain problems with 21st-century learning that Drake has foreseen.

Drake (2012) mentioned that when the 21st-century curriculum falls short in addressing the needs of all students, teachers must provide a bridge; where the system reflects cultural and linguistic insensitivity, teachers must demonstrate understanding and support. Basically, teachers must be culturally responsive, utilizing materials and examples, engaging in practices, and demonstrating values that include rather than exclude students from different backgrounds (p. 419).

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