

CONCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM

Conceptions of Curriculum

Questions

- What is education for? (purpose)
- What is curriculum?
- Who controls curriculum?
 - How?
- Who should control curriculum?
 - Why?

Curriculum

Aims/purpose *not* methods

Progressive

- Humanistic
- Social Reconstructionist

- Transformative
- Open “horizon”

Traditional

- Academic
- Technological

- Mimetic
- Closed “horizon”

Humanistic Curriculum

Assumptions of humanistic curriculum:

- The **source of problems** is found in the *state of affairs* not in the abstract conjuring of researchers who tend to imagine similarities among situations that cannot necessarily be grouped together defensibly.

Humanistic Curriculum

Assumptions of humanistic curriculum:

- **Inquiry** in the humanistic curriculum is based in interaction with the state of affairs to be studied.

Humanistic Curriculum

Assumptions of humanistic curriculum:

- The subject matter sought in the process of humanistic curriculum inquiry is situational insight and understanding, instead of law-like generalizations that extend across a wide range of situations.

Humanistic Curriculum

Assumptions of humanistic curriculum:

- The **end** of humanistic curriculum is increased capacity to act morally and effectively in pedagogical situations, not primarily the generation of generalized, publishable knowledge.

Social Reconstructionist Curriculum

Questions of concern:

- How is knowledge reproduced by schools?
- What are the sources of knowledge that students acquire in schools?

Questions of concern:

- How do students and teachers resist or contest that which is conveyed through lived experience in schools?

Social Reconstructionist Curriculum

Questions of concern:

- What do students and teachers realize from their school experiences? In other words, what impact does school have on their outlooks?
- Whose interests are served by outlooks and skills fostered by schooling?

Questions of concern:

- What do students and teachers realize from their school experiences? In other words, what impact does school have on their outlooks?
- Whose interests are served by outlooks and skills fostered by schooling?

Academic Curriculum

Three versions: structure in the disciplines

- *Forms of knowledge*—
 - Modality: academic disciplines
 - Process: teach mode of thought for each one
- *Discovery of knowledge*—
 - Modality: inquiry
 - Process: teach concepts, attitudes, processes
- *Source of knowledge*
 - Modality: traditional information/content
 - Process: teach great books, traditions, culture

Technological Curriculum

Major points of focus:

▪ Behavioral objectives

▪ Curriculum as predictable ends

▪ Curriculum as predictable end
Accountability and
performance contractings

▪ Systems analysis

“Tools” of Technological Curriculum

- **Tyler Rationale**
- **Curriculum Audit Frase, L., English, F, & Poston, W. Jr. (1995). *The curriculum management audit*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic.**
- **Standardized Testing**

Tyler Rationale

#1: What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?

What Aims, Goals, and Objectives should be sought?

- Educational objectives become the criteria for selecting materials, content outlined, instructional methods developed, and tests prepared.
- Should specify the Kind of Behavior and the Content or Area in which the behavior is to operate.

Examples:

- ❖ To create a simple web page using a text editor.
- ❖ To apply Dewey's theory of the child and the curriculum to the process of developing a curriculum module.

Tyler Rationale

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

Criteria for selecting experiences; are they:

- Valid in light of the ways in which knowledge and skills will be applied in out-of-school experiences?
- Feasible in terms of time, staff expertise, facilities available within and outside of the school, community expectations?

Criteria for selecting experiences; are they:

- Optimal in terms of students' learning the content?
- Capable of allowing students to develop their thinking skills and rational powers?

Tyler Rationale

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

Criteria for selecting experiences; are they:

- Capable of stimulating in students greater understanding of their own existence as individuals and as members of groups?
- Capable of fostering in students an openness to new experiences and a tolerance for diversity?
- Such that they will facilitate learning and motivate students to continue learning?

Criteria for selecting experiences; are they:

- Capable of allowing students to address their needs?
- Such that students can broaden their interests?
- Such that they will foster the total development of students in cognitive, affective, psychomotor, social, and spiritual domains?

Tyler Rationale

#3 How can the educational experiences be organized?

Education experiences must be organized to reinforce each other.

- **Vertical vs. horizontal organization**
- ***Continuity* - refers to the vertical reiteration of major curricular elements.
Reading social studies materials continued up through higher grades**

Tyler Rationale

#3 How can the educational experiences be organized?

Education experiences must be organized to reinforce each other.

- *Sequence* - refers to experiences built upon preceding curricular elements but in more breadth and detail. Sequence emphasizes higher levels of treatment.
- *Integration* - unified view of things. Solving problems in arithmetic as well as in other disciplines.

Tyler Rationale

#3 How can the educational experiences be organized?

Education experiences must be organized to reinforce each other.

- **We aim for educational effectiveness and EFFICIENCY.**
- **Most institutionalized education is MASS education: we want to be able to teach GROUPS instead of individuals.**

Tyler Rationale

#3 How can the educational experiences be organized?

Education experiences must be organized to reinforce each other.

- **Most education is DEPARTMENTALIZED, because we expect someone trained in a specific topic to be more likely to be able to teach that topic. (This is based upon the notion that WORKERS will have higher productivity if they do the same thing over and over again, related to the "social efficiency" theories of Frederick Taylor.)**
- **Generally, we arrange educational experiences from easiest to hardest, and from most general to more specific.**

Tyler Rationale

#4 How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

- **Establish broad goals or objectives.**
- **Classify the goals or objectives.**
- **Define objectives in behavior terms.**
- **Find situations in which achievement of objectives can be shown.**
- **Develop or select measurement techniques.**
- **Collect performance data.**
- **Compare performance data with behaviorally stated objectives.**

Curriculum Audit

Assumptions of Curriculum Audits:

- 1. Organizational control is a necessary part of effective design and delivery of curriculum.**
- 2. Curriculum is purposive, created by design, and therefore reproducible.**

Curriculum Audit

Assumptions of Curriculum Audits:

3. There are generally accepted ideas regarding curriculum design and delivery.

4. The unit of analysis is the school or the school system.

5. School systems are rational entities.

Curriculum Audit

Curriculum Audit standards:

- **The school/district is able to demonstrate its control of resources, programs and personnel.**
- **The school/district has established clear and valid objectives for students.**
- **The school/district is able to direct its resources consistently and equitably to accomplish its mission.**

Curriculum Audit

Curriculum Audit standards:

- **The school/district uses the results from school/district-designed and/or adopted instruments to adjust, improve, or terminate ineffective practices or programs.**
- **The school/district has improved productivity.**