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Abstract

In this survey paper the field of language curriculum development is defined as encompassing the processes of needs analysis, goal setting, syllabus design, methodology and evaluation. Each of these curriculum processes is surveyed and issues and practices in each area are discussed. Needs analysis is discussed in relation to language program planning and evaluation and different needs analysis procedures are examined. Different approaches to the planning of program objectives in language teaching are illustrated and a distinction between behavioral, process, content and proficiency-based objectives is made. The status of methodology within curriculum development is discussed in terms of a distinction between content oriented methods and those concerned primarily with instructional processes. The role of a syllabus within each approach is illustrated.

Keywords: *Language Curriculum Development, Needs Analysis, Goal Setting, Syllabus Design, Methodology, Evaluation, Language Program Planning, Proficiency – Based Objectives, Content Oriented Methods, Instructional Processes*

INTRODUCTION:

What is curriculum?

“The subjects comprising a course of study in a school or college”, this is what the dictionary has to say about ‘curriculum’. But based on the different levels or domains, curriculum may be defined as follows:

1. A plan for achieving goals;
2. Dealing with the learners’ experiences;
3. System for dealing with the society, field of study with its own foundations, theories, principles, and specialists;
4. A concise statement or table of the heads of a discourse, the contents of a treatise, the subjects of a series of lectures;
5. A subject matter or course content.

Curriculum encompasses more than just a simple definition. However, it can be subjective, prescriptive and descriptive.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN LANGUAGE STUDIES:

Curriculum development is an essentially practical activity to improve the quality of language teaching through the use of systematic planning, development, and review practices in all aspects

of a language program. The process of curriculum development covers determining learners' needs, developing aims or objectives to address the needs, determining an appropriate syllabus, course structure, teaching methods, and materials, and carrying out an evaluation of the language program that results from these activities.

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THE DATA FOR LANGUAGE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT:

In language teaching, the data which serve as input to curriculum processes includes:

1. **INFORMATION ABOUT THE TARGET LANGUAGE:** This may include both linguistic and pedagogic descriptions, data on particular varieties or registers of the target language and information on language usage in specific contexts and settings.
2. **INFORMATION ABOUT THE LEARNERS:** This may include information relating to the age, sex, occupations, interests, problems, motivation, attitudes and needs of the learners, their language proficiency and their language learning styles and preferences.
3. **INFORMATION ABOUT THE DELIVERY SYSTEM:** This will include data on the context in which learning will be accomplished such as information about the institutions, administrators, teachers, classrooms, texts, tests, resources and timing and other characteristics of the educational system through which the program will be implemented.
4. **A LEARNING THEORY:** This will specify the processes which constitute second or foreign language learning and the conditions under which it can be accomplished.

5. A TEACHING THEORY: This will describe principles for the selection, sequencing and presentation of language learning experiences.

6. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROCEDURES: These will refer to how language proficiency and achievement will be measured, how learning difficulties and program deficiencies will be diagnosed and how the program and its learners, teachers, curriculum and materials will be evaluated. The goal of language curriculum development processes is to produce effective and efficient language teaching programs. However, at present no single model of language curriculum development can claim to have satisfactorily resolved the question of how these criteria are best applied in practice.

TEACHING METHOD AS A FACTOR INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGNING OF A LANGUAGE CURRICULUM:

The activities of language teaching have often been viewed from a very narrow perspective. This is evident from the fascination with teaching methods that have characterized the history of language teaching until recently. Teaching methods have often been regarded as the most important factor in determining the success of a language program, and advances in language teaching have sometimes been seen as being dependent on the adoption of the latest method. However, clear perspectives are often missing from the method-based view of teaching. How teaching methods interact with other factors in the teaching-learning process is often not thoroughly studied and considered.

SYLLABUS DESIGN AND LANGUAGE TEACHING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT:

1. The history of curriculum development in language studies starts with the notion of syllabus design.

2. Syllabus design is one aspect of curriculum development.

3. Curriculum designing is the process of developing a syllabus.

4. A syllabus is a specification of the content of a course of instruction and lists of what will be taught and tested.

Course syllabus has undergone evolution as it has followed the changes of approaches and methods underlying it.

1. The basic units of language are vocabulary and grammar.

2. Learners everywhere have the same needs.

3. Learners' needs are identified exclusively in terms of language needs.

4. The process of learning a language is largely determined by the textbook.

5. The context of teaching is English as a foreign language.

FACTORS AFFECTING CURRICULUM TODAY:**1. POLITICAL:**

Politics affect curriculum development in numerous ways and how politics influences curriculum design and development start with funding. Both private and public educational institutions rely on funding for hiring personnel, building and maintaining facilities and equipment. In a country like India, where politics plays the vital most role in every sphere including education- from defining goals, interpreting curricular materials to approving examination systems, which courses will be taught, which teachers will be hired, which books will be used, which speakers will be allowed to address the student body thereby controlling which ideas the students are exposed to, the aspects of curriculum at a large scale depend on local, state and national political standards.

2. ECONOMIC:

Curriculum for in-house trainings in corporations focuses on educating employees for promotions that bring better returns in profits. Nations financing education expect an economic return from educated students contributing to the country's economy with global competition abilities in technical fields. Education is at a large extent, is influenced by the need for 'job skills' from the very beginning of high school nowadays. Therefore, curriculum content influences learner goals and standards for academic achievement with an underlying influence of the nation's economy. To the extent that this 'Factory Model' education system works, there is nothing with it. It's just that the outcome is directly or indirectly missing a lot.

3. TECHNOLOGICAL:

Technology-driven curriculum development is the norm of the 21st century. The computer technology of the 21st century influences curriculum development at every level of learning. Learning centers in classrooms increasingly provide computers as requisite interaction for studies among students. Technological multimedia use influences educational goals and learning experiences among students. Undergraduate and graduate degrees in computer technology are in increase in popularity.

4. DIVERSITY:

Curriculum development is affected by diversity that opens learning opportunities. Social diversity includes religion, culture and social groupings. These affect curriculum development because they can influence the types of topics and methods for teaching information. Developing relevant curriculum takes into account society's expectations, accommodating group traditions and promoting equality.

5. ENVIRONMENT:

Environmental issues affect curriculum development. For instance, world awareness and action toward reversing and ending pollution continues to affect curriculum development. Typical elementary classrooms teach recycling and healthy environmental practices.

CONCLUSION:

A developmental approach to curriculum planning for children is considered desirable. The curriculum content should be functional, aiming at promoting the all-round development of these children and helping them to lead an independent life and integrate into the community.

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