

Curriculum and Syllabus

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Abstract:

This article is about perspectives of curriculum, meaning of syllabus and difference between curriculum and syllabus. It is also about principles of curriculum construction. This is because these principles help you when you yourself are up to the task of curriculum development. From B.Ed. point of view this topic comes in the study of pedagogy of various subjects and under subject Knowledge and curriculum.

Keywords: curriculum, syllabus, construction

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I. CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

Curriculum is broadly defined as the totality of student experiences that occur in the educational process. The term often refers specifically to a planned sequence of instruction, or to a view of the student's experiences in terms of the educator's or school instructional goals. Curriculum may incorporate the planned interaction of pupils with instructional content, materials, resources, and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives. A syllabus may be set out by an examination board or prepared by the tutor who teaches or controls the course. It is generally narrower in scope than a curriculum.

Meaning of Curriculum:

The term curriculum is derived from the Latin word "Currere" which means run or run-way or running course. Thus curriculum means a course to be run for reaching a certain goal. A curriculum means, the total situation selected and organized by the institution and made available to the teacher to operate and to translate the ultimate aim of education into reality.

In the words of Cunningham, curriculum is a tool in the hands of the artist (the teacher) to mould his material (the pupil) according to his ideal (objectives) in his studio (the school). The material is highly self active, self-determining human being who reacts and responds consciously.

Meaning of Syllabus:

The word Syllabus derives from modern Latin *syllabus* "List", in turn from a misreading of the Greek *sittybos* (the leather parchment label that gave the title and contents of a document), which first occurred in a 15th-century print of Cicero's letters to Atticus.

Syllabus is defined as the documents that consist of topics or portion covered in a particular subject. It explains the summary of different topics covered or units that will be taught in a specific subject or discipline under that particular course. A syllabus is a kind of instructive tool that sets a standard of what is expected to happen during the complete course session. It prescribes the topics and concepts on the basis of which students will be tested in the final examination. A syllabus actually serves as the contract between the students and the teachers which contains functions and ideas that are used for the assessment of the students' performance.

Difference between Curriculum and Syllabus:

Curriculum and Syllabus are the terms of education, imparted to the students by teachers. It means the knowledge, skills or qualifications that are passed on from one generation to another. A subject syllabus is a unit of the curriculum. The two terms differ in a sense that curriculum is a combination of some factors which helps in the planning of an educational program; whereas a syllabus covers the portion of what topics should be taught in a particular subject. The following are the differences between curriculum and syllabus:

Curriculum	Syllabus
Curriculum refers to all the educational activities of the school in the widest possible sense.	Syllabus refers to a list of unelaborated headings or book let.
Curriculum is a Greek term.	Syllabus is a Latin term.
Curriculum is the sum total of school subjects, learning experiences and activities.	It is basically concerned with school subjects.
Curriculum is based on the philosophy, goals and values of education.	Syllabus does not take into account of these factors.
There is prescribed co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in the curriculum.	No prescribed activities in the form of syllabus.
It is an inclusive concept. It includes syllabus also.	It is a part of a curriculum.
Curriculum has wider scope.	Syllabus has narrower scope.
Curriculum is prescriptive in nature.	Syllabus is more descriptive in nature.
Curriculum includes not only indoor activities but also out-door activities of the school.	Syllabus is concerned with activities mostly undertaken in the classroom.
Curriculum has a countless role to play and it is considered as a plan, an experience, a subject matter or content and as a field map.	Syllabus has a limited role to play and has less significance in the educational world.
Curriculum continues till the completion of a course.	Syllabus duration is one year or a semester.

Thus, one should carefully understand the difference between curriculum and syllabus as they are two important words in the field of education that are often confused as if they mean the same. They are two different words that give different meanings. Curriculum refers to all the educational activities of the school. Syllabus, on the other hand, is portion of study that should be covered in a subject. This is the main difference between curriculum and syllabus. Curriculum is a much broader concept whereas syllabus is much narrower. This with regard to the different areas they cover. Curriculum covers the whole course experience while syllabus only covers a part of that course experience.

II. PRINCIPLE OF CURRICULUM CONSTRUCTION:

In curriculum construction, we think about the type of learning experiences to be given to a child at various age and grade levels. It needs systematic and sequential planning to widen the sphere of the learning experience at each level by keeping in view the principles of integration and correlation. The content of curriculum is determined on the basis of some academic principles which are stated below:

- **Child-centric principle:**

The curriculum should be framed according to the actual needs, interests and capacities of the child. That means a curriculum must be child-centric as modern education is child-centered. The capacity for understanding, how children grow with age. The content of the study in any subject should be formed to suit their mental ability. It is also found that at different stages of age groups, children have different interest patterns. Interests of children also change according to circumstances and situations.

Therefore learning experiences should be designed to suit the interests and tastes of the age group of students.

- **Principles of civic and social needs:**

Man is a social being. He lives in the society. The child develops in the society. Modern education aims at both developments of the individuality of the child as well as the development of the society.

- **Principle of forward-looking:**

The aim of life-centered education is not limited to the present life-situations in the family and society. Hence, education must prepare the child of shouldering future responsibilities. So in forming the curriculum we must take into consideration the future needs of the child as well as the needs of the society.

- **Principle of conservation:**

Man has conserved experiences very carefully for better adaptability. Education is regarded as a means of deserving the cultural heritage of humanity. The school serves two-fold functions in this regard- preservation of the past experiences and transmission of experiences.

- **Principle of preparation for living:**

The children should know the various activities of the environment around them and how these activities are enabling people to meet their basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, recreation, the content of the learning experiences for children should be linked with the needs of the environment in which they live. For example, children from rural areas can understand and grasp easily the information which is directly concerned with their experiences in their own rural environment.

- **Principles of creativeness:**

Education not only conserves that past experiences of humanity but also helps an individual to develop his innate potentialities.

- **Principle of integration and correlation:**

Subjects should be arranged logically and psychologically in accordance with the child's developing interests. The curriculum should be such that all the subjects are correlated with each other. While designing the curriculum, it must be kept in mind that the subject matter of various subjects has some relation to each other.

- **Principle of variety and flexibility:**

The curriculum should include such activities and experiences, which may facilitate his normal development. The curriculum for girls should naturally be different from that of boys; boys and girls have different needs and attitudes.

- **Principle of time:**

Relative significance and importance of each subject in the curriculum has to be judged and determined in the light of the time available in the timetable, which is regarded as the mirror of the school programme. While developing curriculum experts should also keep its implementation in mind. They should be aware of the conditions of the schools and possible availability of time and resources available.

- **Principle of activity centred:**

The curriculum should be centred round the multifarious activities of pupils. It should provide well selected activities according to the general interests and developmental stages of children. It should provide constructive, creative and project activities. For small children, play activities should also be provided. The purposeful activities both in the classroom and outside the classroom should be provided.

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