

Intro

My name is Katie Oman. Currently, I am a school counselor at DGF High School. I focus on grades 11 and 12. I am in this course as I am pursuing my K-12 principal licensure. This is my last semester of class. I am married and have 3 kids who are 12, 9, and 4.

Part 1:

Simply put, curriculum is *what* is being taught and instruction is *how* the curriculum is taught (Flake, 2017). Curriculum supports an agenda or a plan a teacher implements throughout the year as to what they are teaching their students. Instruction is the delivery method. Are teachers lecturing the whole class? Are they splitting their class into small groups? Are students teaching one another? Teachers may use games, demonstrations, discussions, debates, peer reviews, role play, labs, and other methods to teach the content.

Part 2:

Have standards flushed the creativity from our schools?

No, I don't think the standards have flushed creativity from schools. Teachers are still allowed to implement creative lessons (instruction) that still cater to the standards. The standards are a great "tool" for teachers to know what students need to master in that particular subject area. If there were no standards, teachers would not know what to teach.

What was the intended purpose of the Common Core standards?

According to the Common Core website, the Common Core standards are a set of high quality standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy that a student should be able to attain at the end of every grade level. The standards were created to ensure every student graduates with skills needed for college, the career they choose, and life in general. The website makes it clear that the Common Core are *not* a curriculum but is a timeline for what students need to know. Local states/districts get to choose the best curriculum and instruction to make this happen. Additionally, the standards promote equity across school districts (CCSSI, 2019).

Why have the Common Core standards undergone significant criticism?

Reflecting on the various articles I read, the Common Core standards have undergone criticism from a political perspective. Some view the standards as a "top down approach to education reform." Some critics of the common core believe the standards are too broad and don't address specific areas that students are still required to know for standardized tests (Strauss, 2019). Other reasons include the standards are a "one size fits all" approach to learning, encourages a fragmentation of the learning process, fails to provide flexibility to students in special education, encourages teachers to teach the test, requires too many standards per grade level, and

teachers who have taught students in low socioeconomic households were not consulted when establishing the standards (Armstrong, 2018).

What is the most important trait of a curriculum leader?

I believe the most important trait of a curriculum leader is to understand the big picture and communicate the mission and vision of that curriculum to stakeholders (students, colleagues, administrators, community members, etc.). It is important for a leader to have an active part in picking curriculum across content areas/grade levels. Another important aspect is to monitor and help teachers improve the instruction of the curriculum. That could be from an instructional coach, curriculum director, or peer to peer observations. A good leader needs to understand the standards of their building and periodically review classroom syllabi to ensure standards are being met. Additionally, a curriculum leader needs to be confident in the curriculum chosen so he/she is able to communicate that with colleagues, parents, and other community members.

Resources

Armstrong, T. (2018). *12 Reasons the Common Core is Bad for America's Schools*.

Retrieved from

<https://www.institute4learning.com/2018/04/26/12-reasons-the-common-core-is-bad-for-americas-schools/>.

Common Core Standards State Initiative. (2019). Retrieved from

<http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/>.

Flake, L. (2017). *A Look at the Relationship of Curriculum and Instruction and the Art and Science of Teaching*. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1153846.pdf>.

Strauss, V. (2019, April 18). *The 'seven DEADLY sins' of Common core - by an English teacher*. The Washington Post.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/08/18/the-seven-deadly-sins-of-common-core-by-an-english-teacher/>.