Course: Curriculum Development (6406) **Semester: Spring, 2021**

Level: ADE/B. Ed (4 Years)

ASSIGNMENT No. 2

Q. 1 Write notes on the following:

(a) Deschooling

(b) Steps in curriculum design

(c) Benefits of curriculum design

(a) Deschooling

Deschooling is a term invented by Austrian philosopher Ivan Illich. Today, the word is mainly used by homeschoolers, especially unschoolers, to refer to the transition process that children and parents go through when they leave the school system in order to start homeschooling.It is a crucial process that is the basis for homeschooling to work, in which children should slowly break out of their school routine and mentality, develop the ability to learn via self-determination again, and find interests to decide what they want to learn in their first homeschool days. Depending on the type of person and time the child spent in the school system, this phase can last different lengths of time and may have different effects on the behavior of children.

Especially in the first days of deschooling, it is often the case that children mainly want to recover from the school surroundings and therefore will generally sleep very long and refuse any kind of intentional learning and instead search for substitute satisfactions like watching TV or playing video games, very similar to the behavior during early school holidays. Moving on in this transition process, children may feel bored or cannot cope well with the missing daily structure, until they eventually find out how to make use of their time and freedom to find

interests, which in the best case results in them voluntarily informing themselves about certain things they're interested in, whereupon homeschooling can start.

Often considered a recreation or healing step from the school environment, many followers of the modern homeschool movement consider this step more or less necessary as many of them tend to believe that the school system can cause great damage to the innate creativity, curiosity and willingness to learn in children, claiming that most children would only study under unnatural extrinsic pressure like grades instead of for theirself in school and what, when, how, and with whom to learn was always pre-determined instead of self-determinable there.

Background

Deschooling is mainly credited to Ivan Illich, who felt that the traditional schooling children received needed to be reconstructed. He believed that schools contained a "hidden curriculum" that caused learning to align with grades and accreditation rather than important skills. Illich believed that the modern school is grounded on a foundation that is focused on growing schools as an industrialized system. Illich communicated that the school system has formed a toxic industry that specializes in what families should be capable of forming themselves, namely education. According to Illich, schools align success on paper with academic excellence. He presumed that schools, grades, and diplomas gave false assumptions that the students have become knowledgeable in a certain educational concept.

John Holt was an educator who also believed in deschooling. His thoughts were closely aligned with Illich because neither were convinced that school was the place that taught students everything they needed to know. Instead, they communicated that school was not the sole avenue for learning because students learn consistently through other facets, such as exposure to the natural world. As a result, Illich and Holt saw schools as being insufficient because of their focus on strictly doing "skill drill" instead of other methods of learning. Additionally, theorists of deschooling saw education as maintaining the social order. Therefore, they wanted to "denounce the monopoly that traditional education institutions held on education and learning."

Unschooling/deschooling society

"Deschooling" a person does not mean disregarding the act of learning or studying in schools. Illich and Holt's image of an unschooled society would ensure that everybody has the choice of whether they (or their children) attend school. Rather than being forced to go to school, taking a test before entering a school or being denied the opportunity to learn a desired topic, people would be free to choose how they learn. According to John Holt, an advocate for unschooling, "a deschooled society would be a society in which everyone shall have the widest and freest possible choice to learn whatever he wants to learn, whether in school or in some altogether different way." Holt later began to use the term "unschooling" to encompass his educational belief system.

(b) Steps in curriculum design

The curriculum development process takes information from a subject matter expert and, through much iteration, creates instruction. But how does information from an expert get translated into educational content that is effective for learners? It goes through four steps of design. In each step are important team members including project managers, instructional designers, writers, copy editors, and subject matter experts. The team works together to create effective content. Let's have a look at the four steps in the curriculum development process.

1. Gathering Information

The first step of the curriculum development process involves planning and determining who the learner is and what they need to get out of the material. The team begins by initially identifying what the scope is. Some examples of questions to ask at this stage are:

- Who will take the course?
- What does the learner already know?
- What is their attitude towards the subject?

Instructional designers then work with the subject matter expert and obtain the necessary information by asking many questions. With information in hand and a clear idea of the audience, the team moves on to the second step.

2. Design

Now that the team has extracted the information and identified the learner, it is time to begin developing the content. Before designing the content, there needs to be clear objectives. Clear objectives include action words such as:

- Identify
- Modify
- Plan
- Evaluate

As the instructional designers create the objectives, they carefully connect them to the content. The objectives are measurable, which ensures that learning outcomes can occur. The team examines the environment in which the content will be used. They ask questions such as: will the learners be accessing the material on their mobile phones or in a classroom?

The team plans how to sequence the content and what delivery method to use. They perform research, search for appropriate materials, and decide what graphics to use.

3. Building the Content

The third step of the curriculum development process is to build the content into a workable instructional unit. The team combines written material with newly created graphics and, if needed, animation. As the material is being built, there is constant communication between team members. Copy editors work to keep the content consistent by ensuring the work is in the correct style and lines up with the learning objectives. Instructional designers check that the material will lead to measurable outcomes. Multiple iterations occur as material is discussed between team members.

4. Evaluation

The final step of the curriculum development process is evaluation. Although the material has gone through multiple iterations, it is evaluated once more. You could say that step four is present throughout each of the prior steps. Each team member from the beginning is constantly evaluating the material and ensuring that it serves the learner well. For example, the curriculum developer makes sure to match the learning objectives against the material to ensure that the material will lead to measurable results. The project manager tracks all team members' changes and ensures that they incorporate all necessary edits and revisions.

It takes a team to design excellent curriculum. Each step involves collaboration and constant iterations of the material. As a result of this teamwork and dedication to the learner, it is possible to build curriculum that leads to desired learning outcomes.

(c) Benefits of curriculum design

Curriculum mapping lets educators collect and record curriculum-related data that identifies the core skills and content taught, the processes employed and the assessments used for each subject area and grade level. The completed curriculum map then becomes a tool that helps teachers – or even an entire school site – keep track of what has been taught and plan what will be taught.

Richard Anderson, director of information services at Washington International School in Washington, D.C., further defines curriculum mapping as an ongoing process for documenting what's being taught in a meaningful way that's connected to learning outcomes and encourages frequent reflection and planning to better meet students' needs.

“Curriculum mapping becomes an identity for what the school is doing by creating a unified system that takes all the units taught in an entire school and tying them together through automatic tagging and mapping,” Anderson says.

Think of it as a giant framework that identifies a school’s mission and vision, and illuminates them in the form of curricular units.

It helps create a school’s identity or persona

As schools commit to specific initiatives, such as design thinking or diversity and inclusion work, educators can reference these initiatives in the curricular units to provide evidence of the work.

It’s collaborative

Because curriculum mapping is collaborative by nature, teachers can easily build units together, including multidisciplinary units, when common meeting times are rare. It also allows for curriculum coordinators to work closely and efficiently with teachers, strengthening an overall faculty culture of collaboration. This is a key indicator of the ISTE Standards for Educators Collaborator standard 4a, which instructs educators to "dedicate planning time to collaborate with colleaguest to create authentic learning experiences that leverage technology."

It creates a resource center

Assessments. Activities. You name it – they’re all in one place. With curriculum mapping, the outcome is a comprehensive resource center that includes hyperlinks to resources in context.

It lives with the school

Rather than being owners of their unit planners, teachers have editing rights to the planners, thus preventing the deletion of files and helping orient new teachers with what’s been done before. If a teacher leaves the school, the content lives on.

It uses tools teachers are already familiar with and use every day

The last thing teachers want to do is remember another login or learn how to use yet another tool. Curriculum mapping means more time is spent writing valuable curriculum rather than learning a new tool.

It's in the cloud and is automatically saved

Because all the information lives in the cloud and is auto-saved, there's no need to worry about losing work. Plus, a handy revision history lets users see how a unit has changed over time.

ISTE members interested learning how to develop a curriculum mapping site that integrates various Google Suite apps, add-ons and scripts can watch the recording of the ISTE webinar "Curriculum Mapping With G Suite" with Anderson and colleague Fanny Passeport.

Reference:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deschooling#:~:text=Deschooling%20is%20a%20term%20invented,in%20order%20to%20start%20homeschooling

https://apasseducation.com/education-blog/major-steps-curriculum-development-process/

https://www.iste.org/explore/Lead-the-way/6-benefits-of-curriculum-mapping

Q. 2 What should be criteria for including learning activities in the curriculum?

The curriculum framework, including the expected learning outcomes, communicates what teachers and learners should know and do. Curriculum is a description of what, why, how, and how well students should learn in a systematic and intentional way.(14) Expected learning outcomes define the totality of information, knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values, skills, competencies, or behaviours a learner should master upon the successful completion of the curriculum.(14) To improve education quality special efforts are needed to align the intended curriculum (the official guidance), the implemented curriculum (what teachers and learners actually do), and the attained curriculum (what students actually learn)

Issues and Discussion

Curriculum organization: Curriculum frameworks reflect the political and social agreements of education and aim to guide regulation, implementation, and evaluation of curricula.They can be organized by competencies, disciplinary subjects, learning areas, and interdisciplinary or cross-curricular topics.They also define the appropriate learning objectives, or expected learning outcomes, for successive levels of learning. Competency-based curriculum focuses on learners demonstrating mastery of certain interconnected knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In addition to subject-specific competencies, curriculum frameworks may address cross-cutting competencies such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, and principles such as personalization, inclusive systems, sustainable development, and social justice.

Curriculum development: The development of curricula and expected learning outcomes is a dynamic cyclical process requiring reassessment and adaptation over time. Because it involves deciding what knowledge is legitimate and important, it can be a highly political process. In some countries, curriculum is defined primarily at the national level, while in other education systems curriculum is more a matter for local and even classroom-based decision-making, often guided by a framework of learning standards. In today's context of global education goals and international assessments, questions of universality versus contextualization are becoming increasingly important.

While some learning goals may be universally appropriate, there are also specific national, local, and minority concerns that the curriculum needs to take into account. At all levels of curriculum development, relevance is improved when teachers are involved—as long as they are given chances to develop their curricular literacy, and are provided the required resources, time, and incentives for extensive deliberation. New curricula can be tested and refined through feasibility studies and by piloting in select schools.

Ensuring effectiveness and relevance: Effective curriculum is based on backwards planning, which starts from the identification of desired learning results and how these can be measured, and then determines the learning experiences that can lead to these outcomes. There has long been a debate about the relative merits of traditional didactic approaches, versus constructivist or student-centred approaches to curriculum. However, research on learning shows that this is a false dichotomy: for curriculum to be effective, it needs to include a balanced and integrated use of teacher-led guided learning, student-led action learning, and whole context-dependent experiential learning. To be relevant, the curriculum also needs to connect to learners' daily lives, interests, and motivations, and allow for differentiation of learning experiences to meet different students' needs In addition to stating what should be learned, the curriculum therefore needs to give teachers guidance on how to structure teaching and learning activities and how to assess learning achievement.

Dissemination: Specific plans must be laid for the dissemination of new curricula and expected learning outcomes, in order to make educators aware of their existence and of the needed changes in teaching practices. Alignment of textbooks and other pedagogical materials is also a special concern, and the distribution and adoption of any new or revised materials should be addressed as part of the curriculum planning process. Curriculum dissemination plans should also take into account the development of curricular literacy at the level of districts, schools, and individual teachers.

Implementation*:* The implementation of the curriculum framework is a complex process which occurs over time and through many mechanisms. Some policy levers to facilitate implementation include: teacher training, providing incentives for school districts, providing external facilitators to assist in implementation, encouraging demonstrations, and sharing ideas, information, and expertise between educators. Education planners may need to decide on the relative importance of fidelity—precise application of the curriculum in its original form—versus allowing teachers to make adaptations that meet their learners' needs. Planners can monitor implementation to understand how to support the process, by asking four essential questions: what are teachers doing?, what are students doing?, how are materials being use?, and what kind of data should be

collected to answer these questions? Potential methods for data collection can include direct observation, checklists, self-reports, and student portfolios.

Teacher professional development: In order for changes in curriculum and expected learning outcomes to be carried into practice, ongoing teacher development must be central to curriculum policy. Teachers' commitment to change can vary from committed to resistant, due to differences in teachers' curricular literacy, competence, and confidence, as well as whether the curriculum development process included teacher perspectives. Pre-service teacher training systems will often need to be revised to reflect new curriculum frameworks. In addition, interactive professional development is necessary to build understanding of learning outcomes, curriculum, and teaching practices while allowing multiple cycles for assimilation of knowledge, practice, and reflection on experience. Teachers also need to learn how to use learning outcomes and curriculum frameworks to develop formative assessments that can provide evidence of student understanding and skills and allow teachers to interpret evidence and change classroom practices, closing the gap between desired and actual understandings.

Inclusiveness Considerations

Participation of indigenous and minority populations in creating curriculum: Contemporary forms of education are strongly based on a Western model of schooling that spread along with missionary activity and colonialism, in many cases irrevocably altering or replacing indigenous forms of education and socialization. With this legacy in mind, it is important to give indigenous and minority populations new opportunities to decide what knowledge and abilities are to be valued and included in the official curriculum.

Gender: Learning outcomes, curricula, assessments, and teaching practices should be either gender neutral or gender inclusive and non-discriminatory.

Language Minority Students: Providing a quality education to all students means taking special considerations for learners whose mother-tongue is not the language of instruction. Curricula should support teachers in understanding and implementing appropriate practices for these students.

Reference:

https://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en/issue-briefs/improve-learning/curriculum-and-materials/curriculum-and-expected-learning-outcomes

Q. 3 What are the stages of curriculum evaluation algorithms?

This presentation provides an overview of the basic steps involved in conducting an evaluation. For this presentation, we have identified a number of learning objectives. By the end of this presentation, you will be able to:

• Describe the basic steps for conducting an evaluation

• Plan for an evaluation

• Identify the key components of an evaluation plan

• Identify approaches for collecting and analyzing data

• Understand how to communicate and apply findings for program improvement

Why do evaluation

To build evidence of effectiveness, and for program improvement. This diagram illustrates CNCS's overall developmental approach. It shows that evidence falls along a continuum with the understanding that identifying an evidence-based program model requires organizational capacities that correspond to an organization's life cycle. The key building blocks for generating evidence are shown in the diagram. The first step is identifying a strong program design by gathering evidence that supports the intervention to be used. During this initial process, it is helpful to develop a logic model which clearly communicates the central model of your program. We will discuss logic models in more detail later in this presentation. It also is recommended that the program be piloted during this initial step to ensure its effective implementation prior to expanding the program more widely.

Once a strong program design has been identified, the second building block is ensuring the effective full implementation of the program. Efforts should be made to document program processes, ensure fidelity to the central program model, evaluate program quality and efficiency, and establish continuous process improvement protocols. Much of these activities can be

supported through the identification and regular monitoring of performance measures. The next level in the continuum is assessing the program's outcomes.

This process involves developing indicators for measuring outcomes, possibly conducting one of the less rigorous outcome evaluation designs, such as a single group pre-post design to measure program outcomes, and conducting a thorough process evaluation. We will discuss what these types of evaluation designs entail later in this presentation. One step further in the continuum is obtaining evidence of positive program outcomes by examining the linkages between program activities and outcomes. Programs at this level of the continuum will have performed multiple pre- and post-evaluations and conducted outcome evaluations using an independent evaluator. Finally, the highest level of evidence allows a program to make the claim of being evidence-based by attaining strong evidence of positive program outcomes.

At this level, programs have established the causal linkage between program activities and intended outcomes/impacts. Programs at this level have completed multiple independent evaluations using strong study designs, such as a quasi-experimental evaluation using a comparison group or an experimental, random assignment design study. Many of these programs also have measured the cost effectiveness of their program compared to other interventions addressing the same need.

Based on this understanding of a continuum of evidence, a strong program design, sound performance measures, and the identification of measureable program outcomes are a fundamental starting point for building evidence of effectiveness. Consequently, attempts to generate experimental evidence before earlier developmental work has been completed is not recommended and may result in wasting valuable resources. As an agency, CNCS continues to develop a funding strategy that will create a portfolio of programs reflecting a range of evidence levels (e.g., strong, moderate, preliminary) that are appropriate to the program's life cycle and investment of public dollars. CNCS sees value in infusing evaluative thinking and knowledge

into every phase of a program's life cycle – program development, implementation, improvement, and replication/scaling.

Evaluation can be thought of as a set of linked activities, and the process for undertaking an evaluation includes four main phases – planning, development, implementation, and action and improvement. Within each of the 4 broad phases, there are 9 basic steps for conducting an evaluation. The planning phase involves building (or reviewing a program logic model), defining the purpose and scope of the evaluation, budgeting for an evaluation, and selecting an evaluator. The planning phase is followed by the development phase which involves the creation of an evaluation plan. The next phase relates to implementation where data are collected and analyzed. The last phase, action and improvement, involves communicating findings and applying those findings and feedback for program improvement.

Together, these steps are designed to help build a strong foundation for your evaluation. It should be noted that while some order exists as to how programs generally approach evaluation steps, the process largely depends on a project's particular circumstances. In addition, the interdependent nature of the activities means that the steps are not necessarily linear but may evolve throughout the development and implementation of your evaluation strategies. While there are some differences in evaluation requirements between large (>$500K) grantees and small (grantees, these general steps apply to any kind of evaluation. We'll talk through each of these steps in more detail over the next several slides. Think about an evaluation you might conduct for your program, and as we go through the presentation try to think through how each step would apply to your program's evaluation.

The first four steps in conducting an evaluation are part of the planning phase and involve activities that will help you prepare for an evaluation of your program. We'll talk about these four planning steps in more detail over the next few slides. Again, we want to emphasize that these planning steps do not need to follow this particular order. Depending on your program, these activities may overlap with one another or follow a different order than what is presented

above. As you begin to plan for an evaluation of a program or intervention, it is essential that there be a clear and comprehensive mapping of the program or intervention itself.

Thus, a useful first step in planning an evaluation should be to clarify and confirm your program's operations or processes and intended outcomes by developing a logic model. If your program has already developed a logic model, then you might only need to review the existing model and possibly update or refine it to reflect your current program operations and goals. So how can a logic model be used to help in planning for an evaluation? Your logic model can serve as a framework for your evaluation plan by helping you make informed decisions about what to evaluate, when to evaluate, and how you will evaluate. Your logic model can be used as a tool to help you focus your evaluation with respect to the following:

• Identify questions you want or need answered about your program

• Identify which aspects of your program to evaluate (e.g., will you evaluate a subset or all of your AmeriCorps activities? Will you evaluate your program's short-term outcomes?)

• Determine the appropriate evaluation design (e.g., will you use a process or an impact evaluation design, or a combination of both?)

• Identify what information to collect

• Identify measures and data collection methods

• Determine an appropriate timeframe for your evaluation Throughout this presentation, we will be making several references to a logic model – we consider a logic model to be a planning tool that can be used to help guide you through many of the basic steps involved in planning and conducting an evaluation. [Reference pre-work Logic Model handout.]

Note that logic models come in many sizes and shapes and also vary in level of detail, ranging from basic/simple to complex. There is no one or "right" way to develop a logic model. It often depends upon your purpose, how you will use the logic model, who will use the logic model, and what your program entails. The logic model shown here follows the CNCS template, but you

may find that you need to develop a logic model for your evaluation that is slightly different, or expands upon, the logic model that you submitted as part of your AmeriCorps application.

For more information on developing a program logic model, please see the webinar on How to Develop a Program Logic Model located on the National Service Knowledge Network. Let's turn now to talk about a second step in the evaluation planning phase – defining the purpose and scope of your evaluation. Just as your program needs to have a specific purpose and scope, so does your evaluation. Each evaluation should have a primary purpose around which it can be designed and planned, although it may have several other purposes.

The stated purpose of the evaluation drives the expectations and sets the boundaries for what the evaluation can and cannot deliver. In defining the purpose of the study, it is helpful to identify why the evaluation is being done and how the information collected and reported by the study will actually be used and by whom. For example, are program staff trying to understand how to operate the program more efficiently or identify barriers or constraints to implementation? Or does your program need to produce evidence that it is meeting its intended outcomes? Will the results be used by program staff to make changes to the program's implementation? Will the results be used by the program's funder to make decisions about future funding opportunities? In general, defining a specific purpose for your evaluation will allow you to set parameters around the data you collect and methods you will use.

Questions about why your evaluation is being done and how the information will be used should be discussed among a variety of program staff, and any other individuals who may be involved in the evaluation to ensure there is consensus as to what the evaluation will accomplish. As you work to define your evaluation's purpose and scope, you should also consider:

• Whether your funder has any specific evaluation requirements that must be fulfilled. This means that if you are doing an evaluation to fulfill a program requirement set forth by your funder, you want to make sure you understand what exactly those requirements as they will likely drive the purpose and scope of your evaluation. For example, AmeriCorps National Direct

grantees and AmeriCorps State Competitive grantees that receive an average annual CNCS grant of $500,000 or more must conduct an independent impact evaluation, designed to provide statistical evidence of the impact of the program compared to what would have happened in the absence of the program using a comparison or control group. AmeriCorps National Direct grantees and AmeriCorps State Competitive grantees with average grants of less than $500,000 are also required by CNCS to conduct an evaluation. However, the requirement differs in that they may use an internal evaluator rather than an independent one. Another difference in the requirement is that although it is strongly encouraged by CNCS to use the most rigorous evaluation design feasible, they are not required to conduct an impact evaluation that uses a comparison or control group.

• It is also important to take into consideration what resources (time, funds, expertise) are available to carry out the evaluation. Because most programs have limited resources that can be put towards an evaluation, it is important to note that it is not necessary to evaluate every aspect of your program as depicted in your logic model. Your evaluation can have a narrow focus (e.g., only address questions about one of your program's service activities and desired outcomes) or it can have a broader focus (e.g., address questions about each of your program's service activities and desired outcomes), depending on the information you hope to gain from your evaluation and the resources you have available.

Reference:

https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Basic%20Steps%20Description%20of%20Audio.pdf

Q. 4 Explain the steps involving the curriculum evaluation.

Curriculum evaluation

The term "evaluation" generally applies to the process of making a value judgment. In education, the term "evaluation" is used in reference to operations associated with curricula,

programs, interventions, methods of teaching and organizational factors. Curriculum evaluation aims to examine the impact of implemented curriculum on student (learning) achievement so that the official curriculum can be revised if necessary and to review teaching and learning processes in the classroom. Curriculum evaluation establishes:

- Specific strengths and weaknesses of a curriculum and its implementation;
- Critical information for strategic changes and policy decisions;
- Inputs needed for improved learning and teaching;
- Indicators for monitoring.

Curriculum evaluation may be an internal activity and process conducted by the various units within the education system for their own respective purposes. These units may include national Ministries of Education, regional education authorities, institutional supervision and reporting systems, departments of education, schools and communities.

Curriculum evaluation may also be external or commissioned review processes. These may be undertaken regularly by special committees or task forces on the curriculum, or they may be research-based studies on the state and effectiveness of various aspects of the curriculum and its implementation. These processes might examine, for example, the effectiveness of curriculum content, existing pedagogies and instructional approaches, teacher training and textbooks and instructional materials.

Reference;

http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/COPs/Pages_documents/Resource_Packs/TTCD/sitemap/Module_8/Module_8.html

Q. 5 Curriculum of Pakistan does not reflect its philosophical foundations. Discuss

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS:

Based upon fundamental beliefs that arise from one's philosophy of Education, curricular decisions involve consideration of several topics and issues. Precisely for this reason, we consider philosophy one of the major foundation areas in curriculum. In this section, we shall explore several different philosophies of education that influence curricular decisions.

Philosophy and Curriculum

Studying philosophy helps us deal with our own personal systems of beliefs and values, i.e., the way we perceive the world around us and how we define what is important to us. As philosophical issues have always influenced society and institutions of learning, a study of the philosophy of education in terms of Curriculum development is essential.

In essence, a philosophy of education influences, and to a large extent determines, our educational decisions and alternatives. Those who are responsible for curricular decisions, therefore, should be clear about what they believe. If we are unclear or confused about our own beliefs, then our curricular plans are bound to be unclear and confusing. One important step in developing a personal philosophy of education is to understand the various alternatives that others have developed over the years. Here we shall look into the following four major philosophical positions that have, hitherto, influenced curriculum development.

i) Idealism

ii) Realism

iii) Pragmatism

iv) Existentialism

i) Idealism

The doctrine of idealism suggests that matter is an illusion and that reality is that which exists mentally. It emphasizes moral and spiritual reality as the chief explanation of the world and considers moral values absolute, timeless and universal.

If we apply this view to education what would be the implications for the role of teachers and curriculum in education?

Obviously, teachers would act as role models of enduring values. And the school must be highly structured and ought to advocate only those ideas that demonstrate enduring values. The materials used for instructions, therefore, would centre on broad ideas particularly those

contained in great works of literature and/or scriptures. Since it is based on broad ideas and concepts, idealism is not in line with the beliefs of those who equate learning with acquisition of specific facts from various Proponents of realism view the world in terms of objects and matter. They believe that human behavior is rational when it conforms to the laws of nature and is governed by social laws. Applied to education, those ideas begin to reveal a second possible philosophy of education.

ii) Realism

What kind of philosophy will that be? 'Realists' consider Education a matter of reality rather than speculation. Application, The paramount responsibility of the teacher, then, is to impart to learners the knowledge about the world they live in. What scholars of various disciplines have discovered about the world constitutes this knowledge. However, like the idealists, the realists too stress that education should reflect permanent and enduring values that have been handed down through generations, but only to the extent that they do not interfere with the study of particular disciplines. Clearly, unlike the idealists who consider classics ideal subject matter for studies, the realists view the subject expert as the source and authority for determining the curriculum.

iii) Pragmatism

In contrast to the traditional philosophies, i.e., idealism and realism, Pragmatism gives importance to change, processes and relativity, as it suggests that the value of an idea lies in its actual consequences. The actual consequences are related to those aims that focus on practical aspects in teaching and learning (Nash, 1995).

According to pragmatists, learning occurs as the person engages in transacting with the environment. Basic to this interaction is the nature of change. In this sense, whatever values and ideas are upheld currently would be considered tentative since further social development must refine or change them. For instance, at a particular period of time it was generally believed that the earth was flat which was subsequently disproved through scientific research.

To consider, therefore, what is changeless (idealism) and inherited the perceived universe (rea1ism) and to discard social and/or perceptual change is detrimental to the overall development and growth of children. You can now visualize how pragmatism would have influenced the framing of curriculum.

Curriculum, according to the pragmatists, should be so planned that it teaches the learner how to

think critically rather than what to think. Teaching should, therefore, be more exploratory in nature than explanatory. And, learning takes place in an active way as learners solve problems which help them widen the horizons of their knowledge and reconstruct their experiences in consonance with the changing world. What then might be the role of the teacher? The role is not simply to disseminate information but to construct situations that involve both direct experience with the world of the learner and opportunities to understand these experiences.

Having seen three basic philosophical positions that have influenced curriculum development, let us now look at the fourth one.

iv) Existentialism

This doctrine emphasizes that there are no values outside human beings, and thus, suggests that human beings should have the freedom to make choices and then be responsible for the consequences of those choices.

According to this philosophy, learners should be put into a number of choice-making situations, i.e., learners should be given freedom to choose what to study. It emphasizes that education must centre on the perceptions and feelings of the individual in order to facilitate understanding of personal reactions or responses to life situations. Of primary concern in this process is the individual. Since life is based upon personal meanings, the nature of education, the existentialists would argue, should be largely determined by the learner. Individual learners should not be forced into pre-determined programmes of study. Whatever the learner feels he/she must learn should be respected and facilitated by the system. An existentialist curriculum, therefore, would consist of experiences and subjects that lend themselves to philosophical dialogue and acts of making choices, stressing self-expressive activities and media that illustrate emotions and insights. The teacher, then, takes on a non-directive role. The tender is viewed as a partner in the process of learning. As a professional, the teacher serves as a resource facilitating the individual's search for personal meaning rather than imposing some predetermined values or interests on learners.

Existentialism has gained greater popularity in recent years. Today, many educationists talk about focusing on the individual, promoting diversity in the curriculum and emphasizing the personal needs and interests of learners. Here, perhaps, we can recall the philosophy that underlies the open distance education system. Learner-autonomy, which the existentialists seem to suggest, has been and remains the prime characteristic feature of the distance mode of

teaching-learning. Because of the explosion in knowledge and tremendous growth in information technology, the curriculum of the past seems to be obsolete.

To plug the gap between the needs of the learner, the society and the curriculum content, rethinking in the area of curriculum development appears to be unavoidable. What might have been relevant in a particular situation need not necessarily always be so. In essence, social changes demand changes in the existing pattern of education. The inherent potentiality of the system of distance education enables it to accommodate and cater to these changes. It should be clear from the above discussion that by and large, in operational terms, both pragmatism and existentialism find ample expression in open distance education.

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Each of the four major philosophies just described begins with a particular view of human nature and of values and truths, and then proceeds to suggest what such a view implies for curriculum development. Before we conclude our discussion on the philosophical foundations of curriculum, we should make note of a few educational philosophies in order to reinforce what has been said so far.

Educational philosophies:

Although aspects of educational philosophy can be derived from the roots of idealism, realism, pragmatism and existentialism, a common approach is to provide a pattern of educational philosophies which derives from the major schools of philosophy some of which have been touched upon above. Here, we shall be looking into the following four educational philosophies for their implications in the area of curriculum development.

i) Perennialism

ii) Progressivism

iii) Essentialism, and

iv) Reconstructionism

Let us discuss each one of these in this very order.

i) Perennialism

It advocates the permanency of knowledge that has stood the test of time and values that have moral and spiritual bases. The underlying idea is that education is constant, absolute and universal. Obviously, "perennialism" in education is born of "idealism" in general philosophy.

The curriculum of the perennialist is subject-centered. It draws heavily on defined disciplines or logically organised bodies of content, but it emphasizes teaching leaming of languages, literature, sciences and arts. The teacher is viewed as an authority in a particular discipline and teaching is considered an art of imparting inforrnation knowledge and stimulating discussion. In such a scheme of things, students are regarded immature as they lack the judgement required to determine what should be studied, and also that their interests demand little attention as far as curriculum development is concerned.

There is usually only one common curriculum for all students with little room for elective subjects. According to this point of view putting some students through an academic curriculum and others through a vocational curriculum is to deny the latter genuine equality of educational opportunity. Such views appeal to those educators who stress intellectual meritocracy. Their emphasis is on testing students, enforcing tougher academic standards/programmes, and on identifying and encouraging talented students.

ii) Progressivism

This emerged as a protest against perennialist thinking in education. It was considered a contemporary reformist movement in educational, social and political affairs during the 1920's and 30's. According to progressivist thought, the skills and tools of learning include problem solving methods and scientific inquiry. In addition, learning experiences should include cooperative behaviour and self- discipline, both of which are important for democratic living. The curriculum, thus, was interdisciplinary in nature and the teacher was seen as a guide for students in their problem-solving and scientific projects.

Although the progressive movement in education encompassed many different theories and practices, it was united in its opposition to the following traditional attributes and practices: the authoritarian teacher; excessive dependence on textbook methods; memorization of factual data and learning by excessive drilling; static aims and materials that reject the notion of a changing world; and attempts to isolate education from individual experiences and social reality.

Although the major thrust of progressive education waned in the 1950's with the advent of "essentialism", the philosophy has left its imprint on education and educational practices of today. Contemporary progressivism is expressed in several movements including those for a socially relevant curriculum, i.e., a match between subjects taught and student needs which is one of the theoretical bases of distance education.

iii) Essentialism

This philosophy, rooted partly in idealism and partly in realism, evolved mainly as a critique of progressive thought in education. Yet, the proponents of essentialism do not totally reject progressive methods as they do believe that education should prepare the learner to adjust to a changing society. Thus, in essentialism learning should consist in mastering the subject matter that reflects currently available knowledge in various disciplines. Teachers play a highly directive role by disseminating information to students. According to this viewpoint, the main arms of the institution (be it a school or a college) get sidetracked, when, at the expense of cognitive needs, it attempts to pay greater attention to the social and psychological problems of students.

In recent years, the essentialist position has been stated vociferously by critics who claim that educational standards softened during the 1960s and early 1970s. The most notable achievements of the essentialists have been the widespread implementation of competency based programmes, the establishment of grade-level achievement standards, and the movement to reemphasize academic subjects in schools/colleges. In many ways, the ideas of essentialism lie behind attacks on the quality of education by the media and by local pressure groups, which includes, to a good extent, attaces on distance education.

iv) Reconstructionism

It views education as a means of reconstructing society. The reconstructionists believe that as school/college is attended by virtually all youth, it must be used as a means to shape the attitudes and values of each generation. As a result, when the youth become adults they will share certain common values, and thus the society will have reshaped itself.

As for the curriculum, it must promote new social, economic and political education. The subject matter is to be used as a vehicle for studying social problems which must serve as the focus of the curriculum. The following gives you a view of the reconstructionist programme of education: critical examination of the cultural heritage of a society as well as the entire civilization; scrutiny of controversial issues; commitment to bring about social and constructive change; cultivation of a planning-in-advance attitude that considers the realities of the world we live in; and enhancement of cultural renewal and internationalism.

Stemming from this view, reconstruction expands the field of curriculum to include intuitive, personal, mystical, linguistic, political and social systems of theorizing. In general, the

curriculum advocated by reconstructionists emphasizes the social sciences-history, political science, economics, sociology, psychology and philosophy-and not the pure sciences. The thrust is on developing individual self-realization and freedom through cognitive and intellectual activities, and thus, on liberating people from the restrictions, limitations and controls of society. The idea is that we have had enough of discipline-based education and narrow specialization, and that we don't need more specialists now, we need more "good" people if we want to survive. Before we proceed further, let us ask ourselves a question. What insights do we gain from the discussion on the philosophical foundations of curriculum'? Foundations of Curriculum Ideas about curriculum and teaching do not arise in a vacuum. As curriculum development is heavily influenced by philosophy, those involved in such planning should be clear about contemporary, dominant philosophy.

If we are unclear about our philosophy of education,our curriculum plans and teaching procedures will tend to be inconsistent and confused. This being so, we should be aware of the fact that development and awareness of a personal philosophy of education is a crucial professional responsibility. Further, we need to be constantly open to new ideas and insights that may lead to a revision or refinement of our philosophies. Our position should be that no single philosophy, old or new, should serve as the exclusive guide for making decisions about curriculum. What we, as curriculum specialists, need to do, is to adopt an eclectic approach, in which there is no emphasis on the extremes of subject matter or socio-psychological development, excellence or quality. In essence, what we need is a prudent philosophy-one that is politically and economically feasible and that serves the needs of students and society. It is here that open distance education comes forth with its promises for the future.

Reference:

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