UNDERSTANDING THE CONTENT OF CURRICULUM, SYLLABUS METHODOLOGIES

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Annotation: *Researchers frequently disagree on the definitions of the terms curriculum, syllabus, curriculum development, and syllabus design. This discrepancy or absence of agreement hascontributed to the development of some false beliefs, incorrect interpretations, and incorrect application of these ideas among teachers. In order to enable instructors and students access the corpus of knowledge related to educational research and curriculum theory and, in turn, to ground their judgments about curriculum and syllabus, this article is intended to clarify these concepts to facilitate their understanding.*

Key Words: *curriculum, syllabus, curriculum components, syllabus design, process, product, methodology.*

INTRODUCTION

When reading the literature that is currently available on language education, it is easy to see that the terms curriculum and syllabus are occasionally used interchangeably, meaning that one can be used in place of the other. They are also occasionally differentiated, and occasionally they are abused and misunderstood. Similar confusion is being caused by the ideas of syllabus design and curriculum development among scholars and practitioners. The phrases are well-known in school education, but their use in a higher education environment is murkier. Syllabi and instructional curricula are essential elements of language programs; they can have a variety of formats, reflect different learning theories, and be conceptualized in a variety of ways.

MAIN PART

The initial goal of this article is to clarify the ambiguity surrounding the terms "curriculum" and "syllabus" in the literature.

1. The course syllabus

Nunan (2004) identified two primary causes for the difference between researchers and practitioners over the words curriculum and syllabus. The first justification relates to the variations between British and American English. In America, the terms "syllabus" and "curriculum" are interchangeable and both relate to the same idea, namely the subject matter of a particular course.

In British English, the two expressions, however, refer to two distinct ideas. Considering philosophical, sociological, and administrative considerations while

developing and designing an educational program is referred to as the general notion of curriculum. Although the syllabus is regarded as a component of the curriculum, it is focused with defining the material that will be taught. Hence curriculum is expected to deal with all the pedagogical measures related to schooling or any other educational institution or system. Accordingly, we can speak of the school curriculum, or the university curriculum. In its narrowest sense, the term curriculum refers to the course of study or content on a particular subject, such as the linguistics curriculum, or the physics curriculum. It is, therefore, used as a synonym of syllabus. This latter is more localized and restricted to what actually happens in the classroom between teachers and learners as they apply a curriculum to their situation. Clarifying the concept of syllabus is not an easy task either. If curri References culum refers to "all aspects of planning, implementing, evaluating, and managing an educational program" the syllabus is its result. It is a more concrete term, referring to the actual events in the classroom, i.e. the application of a syllabus to a given situation. Another disagreement exists between researchers and applied linguists concerning the definition of the term 'syllabus design'. While some approaches narrow the use of the term, others consider it in a broader perspective. The narrow view restricts syllabus design to the selection and gradation of content, and thus separating syllabus design from methodology. Those who adopt a broader view question this strict distinction and wonder whether it is possible to separate content from tasks, mainly with the advent of communicative language teaching . Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define syllabus as follows: "at its simplest level a syllabus can be described as a statement of what is to be learnt …it reflects an official assumption as to the nature of language and linguistic performance" (Hutchinson, Waters, 1987, p. 80). This definition is a traditional interpretation of syllabus that focuses more on outcomes than on the learning processes, it clearly separates syllabus design, which is concerned with the selection and gradation of content, from methodology, which deals with the specification of learning tasks, activities, teaching procedures and techniques. In language learning and teaching, this type of syllabus focuses on mastery of the language, i.e. the focus is on grammatical structures and accuracy, and the teaching method associated with this type of syllabus would be the grammar translation method. As it is maintained by Clark classical humanism favours a methodology which emphasizes "conscious study and deliberate learning under the teacher's presentation of knowledge elements (i.e. language) and rules, which are divided and sequenced from the simple to the more complex. Learners are expected to produce the ends of the instruction in new contexts, for example, create new sentences using grammatical items and vocabulary learnt in class".

The purpose of this article is to clarify the differences between the terms curriculum and syllabus, as well as curriculum development and syllabus design.

It is an effort to cover and present the various definitions and opposing viewpoints of researchers and applied linguists with reference to these ideas.

CONCLUSION

The concepts of a curriculum and a syllabus are presented as two distinct ideas, and justifications are offered to support this position. The curriculum is a blueprint for organizing and guiding the teaching-learning activities that students participate in inside a school. The process of providing the plan and keeping it running smoothly is known as curriculum development. The curriculum should be regarded as an inclusive, comprehensive term that includes determination of aims and goals (planning), design, implementation and evaluation. Syllabus design is just a subcomponent of the curriculum; but, the syllabus should mirror and Discussing the Concepts of Curriculum reflect the curriculum theory, its goals and objectives. However, one important point needs to be stressed and highlighted in that, it is a very challenging task for the curriculum designers to effectively comprehend the educational context (school, university or any other institution) and the culture of the society and develop a well-designed curriculum model that fits the different profiles of learners, answer the needs of society and its values and deal with the available resources. Developing a curriculum is both a moral and societal activity, decisions need to be taken regarding the interests of the learners, parents and teachers. The needs of a given society must be met, in terms of its political stance and economic demands. It is a very complex issue as it also involves the transmission of values and culture.

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