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EMERGENCE OF A CURRICULUM APPROACH IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

A curriculum in a school context refers to the whole body of knowledge that children acquire in schools. Rodgers (1989, 26) comments:

Syllabi, which prescribe the content to be covered by a given course, form only a small part of the total school program. Curriculum is a far broader concept. Curriculum is all those activities in which children engage under the auspices of the school. This includes not only what pupils learn, but how they learn it, how teachers help them learn, using what supporting materials, styles and methods of assessment, and in what kind of facilities.

One of the most important statements on the nature and process of curriculum development was made by Tyler in 1949.

Four fundamental questions must be answered in developing any curriculum and plan of instruction. These are:

(1)   What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?

(2)   What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?

(3)   How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?

(4)   How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

Tyler argued that educational objectives should describe learner behavior (not teacher behavior) and should identify what changes have come about in learners as a result of teaching. Tyler's model or variations of it soon penetrated wide areas of educational thought and practice and curriculum and training manuals were soon full of models such as the following

1. NEED	2. PLAN
Aims Objectives	Strategies Tactics
3. IMPLEMENTATION	4. REVIEW
Methods Technique	Evaluation Consolidation

Some critics of Tyler's approach see the idea of goals as a limited view of knowledge, and some criticize the technical aspect The rational approach to the model seemed more suitable for business or industry than education. Others criticized the linear approach included in the model, which leaves the evaluation as a final stage and is not Build it at every stage.

In its place they proposed a cyclical model. Nicholls and Nicholls (1972, 4), for example, describe curriculum development as involving four stages.

(a) The careful examination, drawing on all available sources of knowledge and informed judgement, of the objectives of teaching, whether in particular subject courses or over the curriculum as a whole.

(b) The development and trial use in schools of those methods and materials which are judged most likely to achieve the objectives which teachers agreed upon.

(c) The assessment of the extent to which the development work has in fact achieved its objectives. This part of the process may be expected to provoke new thought

about the objectives themselves.

(d) The final element is therefore feedback of all the experience gained, to provide a starting point for further study.

In the field of curriculum studies the approach was sometimes reduced to a mechanistic set of procedures and rules known as a systems-design model. A system in this context is "an integrated plan of operation of all components (sub-systems) of a system, designed to solve a problem or meet a need" (Briggs 1977, 5).

In many countries, language curriculum development units have been established in ministries of education since the 1980s with a mandate to review and develop national language teaching curriculum based on a curriculum development perspective.

For example, Lim (1988, 2, cited in Ho 1994) comments on such an initiative in Singapore and notes that curriculum development now includes "needs analysis, goal setting, syllabus design, materials design, language programme design, teacher preparation, implementation of programmes in schools, monitoring, feedback and evaluation."

the products of these decision-making processes are easy to identify and analyze because they exist in the form of policy documents, syllabuses, tests, teaching materials, teaching programs, textbooks, and teaching and learning acts (Johnson 1989), the processes that lead to them are more difficult to identify and analyze because they often reflect the contributions of a variety of people with different roles and goals. Johnson (1989, 3) represents these different decision-making roles and products in the following.

Clark (1987) emphasizes that these are often processes of renewal rather than development, since some sort of curriculum is already in place. Teachers and curriculum planners are engaged in ongoing processes of review and evaluation in order to bring about curriculum renewal and change.

Clark identifies the following components of the process of curriculum renewal• the review of principles to guide the language teaching/learning process in the light of applied linguistic theory and classroom experience

• the reworking of syllabuses embodying aims, objectives, content, and a broad methodology

• the review of classroom teaching/learning strategies

• the choice, adaptation, and creation of resources embodying appropriate learning experiences

• the review of assessment designed to monitor, record, report, and provide feedback on learner progress

• the review of classroom schemes of work relating all of the above together

• the review and creation of strategies designed to assist teachers to evaluate classroom practices and to improve them

- the identification of
areas for research to
determine possible
ways forward in any of
the above areas

- the review or devising of in-service education designed to assist teachers to widen their conceptual and pragmatic base in particular areas, and to find solutions to their own classroom problems.