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Curriculum and Syllabus

Introduction

Curriculum and syllabus are two essential components of any educational program. They work together to guide the teaching and learning process. Curriculum refers to the overall plan of what will be taught, and syllabus refers to the specific outline of a course, including the topics covered, learning objectives, and assessment methods. The curriculum is a broader concept that encompasses the overall educational program for a particular level or institution. It outlines the scope and sequence of what students will learn and at what level. The curriculum sets the framework for what will be taught, how it will be taught, and what learning outcomes are expected.

On the other hand, a syllabus is a detailed plan for a specific course within the broader curriculum. It typically includes information such as course goals and objectives, reading assignments, assessment methods, and grading policies. A syllabus provides students with a roadmap for what they can expect to learn in a course, and what will be expected of them to demonstrate their learning.

In summary, the curriculum is the big picture, while the syllabus is the specific plan for a particular course. Both are crucial components of education, and they work together to ensure that students receive a comprehensive and meaningful learning experience.

Definition of Curriculum

Curriculum refers to the set of courses, learning objectives, instructional materials, and educational experiences that are designed to guide and support the learning and development of students in a particular educational program or institution. It outlines the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students are expected to acquire throughout their studies, and provides a roadmap for teachers, students, and other stakeholders to follow.

A curriculum can vary depending on the level of education, the subject area, and the educational philosophy of the institution or program. It may be prescriptive, outlining specific learning outcomes and activities, or more open-ended, allowing for more flexibility in how students achieve their learning goals. Regardless of its format, a well-designed curriculum should provide a coherent and comprehensive framework for learning, and should be aligned with the needs of students, teachers, and society as a whole.

Types of Curriculum

There are several types of curriculum that can be used in educational settings. Here are some examples:

1. **Explicit or formal curriculum:** This refers to the official curriculum that is established by a governing body or educational institution. It outlines what students are expected to learn and the specific knowledge and skills they should acquire.
2. **Hidden or informal curriculum:** This refers to the unwritten and implicit lessons that are taught in schools, such as social norms, values, and beliefs. These lessons are often conveyed through the school culture, interactions with peers and teachers, and extracurricular activities.
3. **Null or excluded curriculum:** This refers to the topics or subjects that are deliberately excluded from the formal curriculum, either due to limited resources or ideological reasons.
4. **Integrated or interdisciplinary curriculum:** This refers to the use of multiple subjects or disciplines to teach a single topic or theme. It encourages students to see connections between different subjects and apply their knowledge in a more holistic manner.

5. Spiral curriculum: This refers to a curriculum that revisits topics or skills at different levels of complexity or depth over time, allowing students to build upon prior knowledge and skills.
6. Problem-based curriculum: This refers to a curriculum that is designed around real-world problems or challenges, encouraging students to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills.
7. Core curriculum: This refers to a set of courses or subjects that are considered essential for all students to learn, regardless of their interests or career goals. It typically includes subjects such as language arts, science, and social studies.

Characteristics of Curriculum

The characteristics of a curriculum can vary depending on its specific context and purpose, but generally, the following are some common features:

1. Content: A curriculum includes a specific set of learning objectives, subject matter, and activities designed to help students achieve those objectives.
2. Scope and Sequence: The curriculum outlines the breadth and depth of the knowledge and skills that students will acquire, as well as the order in which they will be taught.
3. Assessment: A curriculum typically includes methods for evaluating student learning, such as tests, assignments, and projects.
4. Flexibility: A curriculum should be adaptable to the needs and abilities of students, and should allow for modifications or adjustments as necessary.
5. Relevance: The curriculum should be relevant and applicable to the real world, and should help students develop practical skills and knowledge that they can use in their lives.
6. Coherence: The curriculum should be internally consistent, with different parts of the curriculum working together to build on each other and provide a comprehensive learning experience.

7. **Alignment:** The curriculum should align with state or national standards and goals for student learning, as well as with the goals and objectives of the educational institution or program.
8. **Integration:** The curriculum should integrate different subject areas and provide opportunities for interdisciplinary learning, as well as for connections between theory and practice.
9. **Responsiveness:** The curriculum should be responsive to changing social, cultural, economic, and technological trends, and should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.
10. **Inclusivity:** The curriculum should reflect the diversity of student backgrounds and experiences, and should provide opportunities for all students to succeed and thrive

Definition of Syllabus

It is a document that outlines the topics, learning objectives, readings, assignments, assessments, and expectations for a course of study. It is typically provided by an instructor or teacher at the beginning of a course, and serves as a guide for students to understand what they will be learning and how they will be evaluated. The syllabus also provides information about course policies, such as attendance requirements, grading scales, and academic integrity policies. Overall, the syllabus is an essential tool for both instructors and students to ensure clarity and transparency in the learning process.

Differences between Curriculum and Syllabus

Curriculum and syllabus are two terms that are often used interchangeably, but they have slightly different meanings and purposes, as follows:

A curriculum is a comprehensive plan for teaching and learning that outlines the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should acquire during a particular course of study or educational program. It is a broad framework that provides an

overview of the entire educational experience and includes everything from the goals and objectives of the program to the content, materials, and methods used to deliver instruction.

A syllabus, on the other hand, is a detailed outline of a course of study that typically includes a schedule of topics to be covered, a list of required readings and assignments, grading policies, and other logistical information such as the instructor's office hours and contact information. It is a more specific and detailed document that provides students with a roadmap for the course.

In summary, the main differences between a curriculum and a syllabus are:

A curriculum is a broader framework that outlines the overall goals and objectives of a course or program, while a syllabus is a more specific document that outlines the details of a particular course.

A curriculum is typically created at the institutional or departmental level, while a syllabus is created by individual instructors for their specific courses.

A curriculum is designed to provide a cohesive and comprehensive educational experience, while a syllabus is designed to provide students with specific information about a particular course.