

Principles of Curriculum Construction

Civics is a social science. All social sciences are purposeful by nature. Civics too has certain aims. The main aim of the teaching of civics is to attain these aims. Well-planned system is needed for the attainment of these aims, which is called curriculum. Aims cannot be attained in the absence of an adequate curriculum. Thus, the curriculum is a means to attain the aims.

Meaning and Definitions of Curriculum

Education is a three-dimensional process. Its three organs or dimensions are teacher, student and curriculum. Educational process cannot take place in the absence of the curriculum. It is the axle or nerve centre of the entire educational process. The form of education and teaching is determined by the format of curriculum. We shall now discuss the meanings of curriculum in three senses :

1. Etymological Meaning of Curriculum

The term 'curriculum' has been derived from the Latin word 'currere' which means 'race course'. In its verbal sense, we can say that a course which is completed by an individual is the curriculum. From this viewpoint, education becomes a race which is run on the course of classroom, and by which a child attains the aim of personality development.

2. Narrow Meaning of Curriculum

In its narrow sense, the term 'curriculum' is synonym to 'course of study' or 'syllabus', in which the limits of certain facts pertaining to a particular aspect are contained. Thus, narrow sense of curriculum is limited to its bookish knowledge. No place is given to students' needs, interests, aptitudes, attitudes, capabilities and practical activities. In brief, we can say that the curriculum, in its narrow sense, means that course which provides for bookish knowledge only.

3. Wider Meaning of Curriculum

In its wider sense, curriculum comprises all those experiences which students attain in and out of classroom from different subjects, games and activities as per their needs, interests, aptitudes, attitudes and caps for the all-round development of their personality.

According to **Munroe** : "*Curriculum embodies all the experiences which are utilized by the school to attain the aims of education.*"

According to **Bent and Kroneberg** : "Curriculum, in its broader sense, includes the complete school environment, involving all the courses, activities, reading and associations furnished to the pupils in the school."

In brief, we can say that curriculum includes all those experiences and activities held for students which are helpful in their and society's all-round development.

Definitions of Curriculum

We shall now discuss the definitions given by prominent scholars in order to explain the meaning of curriculum :

1. "It (curriculum) is a tool in the hands of the artist (teacher) to mould his material (pupil) according to his ideal (objective) in his studio (school)." —**Cunningham**
2. "Curriculum, in its broader sense, includes the complete school environment, involving all the courses, activities, reading and associations furnished to the pupils in the school." —**Rudyard K. Bent and Henry H. Kroneberg**
3. "Curriculum should be conceived as an epitome of the rounded whole of the knowledge and experience of the human race." —**Froebel**
4. "Subject-matter of learning or curriculum is identical with all the objects, ideals and principles which enter as resources obstacles into the continuous intentional pursuit at a course of action." —**John Dewey**
5. "Curriculum embodies all the experiences which are offered to learners under auspices or direction of the school." —**R. Dall**
6. "The curriculum is the sum total of the activities that go on in the environment." —**Anon**
7. "Curriculum embodies all the experiences which are utilized by the school to attain the aims of education." —**Munroe**
8. "The curriculum may be defined as all the experiences that pupils have while under the direction of the school, it includes both classroom and extra-activities, work as well as play." —**C. Walter**
9. "Curriculum does not mean only the academic subjects traditionally taught in the school, but it includes the totality of experiences that a pupil receives through manifold activities that go in the school, in the classroom, library, laboratory, workshop, playground and the numerous informal contacts between teacher and pupils. In this sense, the whole life of the school becomes the curriculum which can touch the life of the students at all points and help in the evolution of a balanced personality." —**Secondary Education Commission, (1952-53)**
10. "We conceive of the school curriculum as the totality of learning experiences that the school provides through all the manifold activities in the school or outside, that are carried on under its supervision." —**Education Commission**
11. "Curriculum includes all the learner's experiences in or outside school that are included in a programme which has been devised to help him to develop mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and morally." —**Crow and Crow**
12. "The curriculum is that which the pupil is taught. It involves more than the acts of learning and quiet study, it involves occupations, production, achievements, exercise, activity. It thus, is representative of the motor as well as the sensory elements in the nervous system of the side of society, it is representative of what the race has done in its contact with its world." —**Horne**

13. "A programme of activities designed so that pupils will attain, as far as possible, certain educational ends or objectives is known as the curriculum." —**Paul Hurst**
14. "The curriculum may be considered as the vehicle whereby and through which we hope to enable children to achieve the objective of education." —**Henry J. Otto**
15. "Curriculum is the sum of the educational experiences that children have in school."
—**H. Robert Back and W. Walter Cook**
16. "Curriculum is the sum total of student activities which the school sponsors for the purpose of achieving its objectives." —**Alberty A. and Alberty E.**
17. "Curriculum consists of all the situations that the school may select and consciously organize for the purpose of developing the personality of its pupils and for making behavioural change in them." —**Payne**
18. "Curriculum consists of all the experiences of the learner under the control of school. It is more than the textbook, more than subject matter, more than even a course of study. It is the total situation or group of situation available to teacher and the school administration through which to make behavioural changes in the endless streams of children and youth who pass through the doors of the school." —**Brubacher**
19. "The school curriculum is the total effort of the school to bring about desired outcomes in school and out of school situations." —**Saylor, J.G. and Alexander, W.H.**
20. "The curriculum consists of content, teaching methods and purpose, may be in its rough and ready, may be a sufficient definition with which to start. These three dimensions interacting are operational curriculum." —**Philip H. Taylor**
21. "The curriculum is all that goes in the lives of children, their parents and teachers. The curriculum is made up of everything that surrounds the learner in all his working hours. In fact, the curriculum has been describe as the environment in motion." —**Caswell**
22. "All the learning which is planned or guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school, is known as curriculum." —**John F. Keer**

1. Principle of Motivation : The curriculum should be able to motivate students. If it does not motivate students towards learning, then desirable aims cannot be realized. A curriculum cannot motivate students until it is based on students' interests, wishes, abilities and capabilities. Besides, a curriculum should be psychological. Such a curriculum can be constructed better by a child psychologist. If the curriculum overlooks these principles, then students would not take interest in the lesson. A student may sit in the class silently due to the fear factor, but he would not take active part in teaching. He will be reduced to a mere listener, get bored up of teaching work and it would create a gap between student and school, which would be hard to fill.

2. Principle of Broadness : The curriculum should be broad or extensive. It should not be limited to only books, class and library. Learning civics should not be limited to only books and class teaching. As has been discussed above, civics should be taught from the entire educational environment of the school.

We can also analyse the principle of broadness from another viewpoint. The curriculum should not be base on narrow ideologies. The curriculum should be so constructed that it does not hurt or mock at the sentiments of any faiths. Such a curriculum would help in expanding students' outlook too.

3. Principle of Activity : The curriculum should be activity-centred. Children learn by doing. This doctrine has proven its superiority. The experience or knowledge that a pupil gains by doing himself is retained by him over a long period of time, and is effective too. Besides, psychology tells us that children are active by nature. If this activeness of children is used in socially-useful activities then it could be directed to unwanted directions if not properly guided. Therefore, if the curriculum is able to employ children in purposeful and meaningful activities, it would be able to realize its goals. From this viewpoint, we can say that activity should be given an adequate space in the curriculum.

4. Principle of Linking with Life : To cultivate students' interests in a subject and to make it all the more attractive, it is essential that the curriculum is linked to life activities. The students take interest in those activities which are linked with their daily life, because it functions like an authentic fact. Students wish to know more about things around them. Therefore, if we include such activities in the curriculum which are directly related to student' life, it would become very effective. This principle should always be kept in view while constructing a curriculum for civics.

5. Principle of Utility : The knowledge which is not useful for our life is meaningless. In the same way, if a study material is not capable of being utilized is as good as meaningless. It is useless to work for such a wasteful thing. Keeping this fact in view, we can say that the curriculum should be such that students can be given useful instruction for life, so that they can apply it in their practical life. Besides, when students conceive the importance or usefulness of something in their life, their interest and motivation are aroused automatically. Therefore, it should be kept in view that the curriculum should be useful.

6. Principle of Democratic Concepts : The curriculum should be based on democratic principles because now we are living in the age of democracy. The

success of democracy depends on able citizens. Students are future citizens of the country. Therefore, the curriculum should be such that students are able to assimilate the qualities of able citizenship, especially the qualities of cooperation, sympathy, tolerance, honesty, equality, brotherhood, etc.

7. Principle of Preservation and Transmission of Culture : Each society has its peculiar culture. It has its unique traditions, customs and values. A society has its unique existence due to these factors. If these factors disappear, then the society too would come to an end, therefore it is essential to preserve and transmit these. This task is assigned to education. The society expects from education that it would preserve the cultural heritage and transmit to the future generations. If education fails to achieve this, then the society would not be able to tolerate such education. Therefore, it becomes inevitable that education should train students in ancient culture, civilisation and glory of the society. While constructing the curriculum, it should be kept in view that the curriculum should give adequate space to our culture and civilisation.

8. Principle of Correlation : We receive different types of knowledge, which are related to each other in some or the other way. This occurs due to physical and mental constitution. The curriculum should be constructed on the basis of this physical and mental constitution, it should be able to impart the knowledge of different types of knowledge that it becomes a complete whole. The curriculum should make an effort to correlate the entire spectrum of subjects with each other.

In addition to these principles, scholars have also given different principles of curriculum construction. However, all these principles have been included in the principles mentioned above, and no worthwhile purpose will be served by mentioning them separately. These principles are mainly the principle of selection, the principle of modernity, the principle of analytical faculty, the principle of utilization of leisure time, etc.