CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM

The Concept of Curriculum is a dynamic as the changes that occur in the society. Curriculum is also viewed merely as listing of subjects taught in school. Some define it as a total learning experiences of individuals not only in schools but in society as well.

There are many definitions of curriculum. That is why curriculum is sometimes characterized as fragmentary, elusive and confusing. The numerous definition of curriculum indicates dynamism, it has diverse interpretations of what curriculum is all about. Bilbao, et.al. (2008) describe curriculum definitions as influenced by modes of thoughts, pedagogies, political as well as cultural experience.

TRADITIONAL VIEWS OF CURRICULUM

Curriculum is a body of subjects or subject matter prepared by teachers for the students to learn or they call it as “Course of the study” and “Syllabus”

Robert M. Hutchins views curriculum as a permanent studies where rules of grammar, reading, rhetoric and logic and mathematics for basic education are emphasize. It also emphasizes the 3Rs and college education should be grounded on liberal education.

Arthur Bestor, an Essentialist, believes that the mission of school should be intellectual training, hence curriculum should focus on the fundamental intellectual discipline of grammar, literature and writing. It also includes mathematics, science, history and foreign literature.

Joseph Swab states that discipline is the “Sole Source of Curriculum”. Thus in education system, curriculum is divided into chunks of knowledge which we call subject areas in basic education such as English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Others. In college, discipline includes humanities, sciences, languages and many more.

Phenix said that curriculum should consists entirely of knowledge which comes from various disciplines. DISCIPLINE is a ruling doctrine for curriculum development.

Curriculum is viewed as a field of study which is made up of its foundation consisting of philosophical, historical, psychological and social foundations; domains of knowledge as well as its research theories and principles. It is taken as scholarly and theoretical. Most of the traditional ideas view curriculum as written documents or plan of action in accomplishing goals.

It is a group of subjects arranged in a certain sequence peculiar to the subject field for the purpose of instruction. This is based on the assumption that the role of education is to fit the individual for his place in the society. Unique needs and interest have been placed second to the common needs of all. Such traditional concepts of curriculum is now being challenged by those who see a broader dimension of curriculum.

PROGRESSIVE VIEWS OF CURRICULUM

In the progressivist view, a listing of school subjects, syllabi, course of the study, and list of courses or specific discipline do not make a curriculum. These can only be called curriculum if the written materials are actualized by the learners.
Curriculum is a total learning experiences of the individual. John Dewey believed that REFLECTIVE THINKING is a means that unifies curricular elements. Thought is not derived from action but tested by application.

Palma (1992) defines curriculum as the sum of all learning content, experiences and resources that are purposely selected, organized and implemented by the school in pursuit of its peculiar mandate as a distinct institution of learning and human development.

Caswell and Campbell define curriculum as “all experiences children have under the guidance of the teachers”. This definition is shared by Smith, Stanley and Shores that curriculum is a sequence of potential experiences set up in the schools for the purpose of disciplining children and youth in group ways of thinking and acting.

Marsh and Willis view curriculum as “experiences in the classroom which are planned and enacted by the teacher, and also learned by the students”.

The modern dimension of curriculum consists of all experiences for learning which are planned and organized by the school. It is composed of the actual experiences and activities of learners inside and outside the classroom under the guidance of the teacher for which the school accepts responsibility. The curriculum becomes an enterprise in guided living and specialized tool for directing the interest and abilities of the learner toward effective participation in the life of the community of the nation.