

Discussion on three main elements and their roles in curriculum development

Wenting YANG

Jining Normal University, Wulanchabu 012000, China

Abstract: A curriculum is a combination of the plan and design for teaching objectives, teaching contents and teaching activities, as well as the implementation process. It is also the teaching contents and processes chosen by the school or colleges to achieve the educational objectives, including all subjects instructed by teachers and the deliberate as well as purpose-driven teaching activities. In the process of curriculum development, three elements are essential and indispensable, which are curriculum planning, intelligent guidance of learners' experiences, and meaningful appraisal. In this paper, the three aspects are discussed on how they play significant roles in curriculum development, and how they can help teachers implement curriculum development in a more practical and effective way.

Key words: curriculum development; curriculum planning; learners' experiences; appraisal

1 Introduction

Curriculum development refers to the process of structuring a course of study in accordance with a set of objectives. As we all know, curriculum is the plan and design for teaching objectives, teaching contents and teaching activities. It integrates the implementation process of teaching syllabus, teaching plan, teaching arrangement and other teaching programs. It is also comprised of the teaching contents and processes selected by the school or colleges to achieve the educational objectives, including all subjects taught by teachers and the purposeful as well as planned teaching activities. So three elements play significant role in curriculum development, which are curriculum planning, intelligent guidance of learners' experiences, and meaningful appraisal. At first, curriculum planning serves as the guiding framework for formulating the curriculum and the principle to arrange what subjects to be established. Furthermore, learners' great benefit and achievement are the best proof for the development of curriculum. And then, meaningful appraisal can help to know about the achievement effect of curriculum implementation and whether the curriculum objectives have been achieved. Consequently, if the three aspects are well designed and applied, the curriculum development can work more effectively and scientifically.

2 The three main elements and their roles in curriculum development

2.1 Thoughtful planning

Curriculum refers to the the entire range of subjects that students are required to learn along with their respective process and arrangement, in which planning and arrangement for teaching and learning are so crucial, serving as the guidance for formulating the curriculum and the principle to determine what subjects to be established. Therefore, for

effective curriculum development, a comprehensive, specific, well-organized, suitable and thoughtful planning is essential.

Curriculum planning entails the overall plan of curriculum setting and arrangement according to the educational purpose and the cultivation goal of the school. It serves as a guiding document for school education and teaching work formulated by the relevant department of the national education system, which comprises the comprehensive arrangement of teaching and various teaching-learning activities [1].

The plan reflects the unified requirements set by the state for schools. It serves as the basic program and primary reference for teaching in educational institutions, the basis for developing curriculum standards and textbooks, and the basis for supervising and evaluating school education and teaching practices. Thoughtful planning mainly focuses on the establishment of disciplines, the sequencing for arranging disciplines, time allocation for the whole subject and individual classes, semesters compilation and weekly arrangement. With the advancements of modern society and education, the setting of disciplines has undergone significant reforms. Not only subjects focusing on basic knowledge are offered, but also practical, instrumental, scientific, aesthetic, and moral education subjects, all aimed at fostering students' comprehensive development.

Thoughtful planning is paramount in reflecting the scientific aspects of curriculum development. All the subjects should be reasonably arranged according to the prescribed number of years, subjects content, connection between subjects and students' development level, which should be arranged from easy to difficult, from simple to complex [2].

Thoughtful planning encompasses numerous aspects and considerations, e.g., what subjects should be arranged to meet the needs of the nation, the school and students themselves, what teaching strategies should be selected and adopted for different situations and background, what kind of learning resources can be provided and applied effectively and properly, how to evaluate the achievement and outcomes of curriculum, which are all factors to be considered, decided and implemented in a more appropriate way. Teachers should first arrange class schedule, make clear the opening sequence of each course and class allocation, and then analyze teaching tasks, study students' learning characteristics and learning background, select and determine the teaching mode, plan teaching units and lessons, organize and carry out teaching activities, and ultimately evaluate the process and results of teaching activities. All these should be well and fully considered and implemented to achieve the curriculum outcomes.

The global trend for curriculum planning is to make curriculum settings more reasonable, curriculum content more comprehensive, curriculum forms more diverse, curriculum conception more innovative, curriculum design more personalized and curriculum establishment more modern. Consequently, all these thoughtful planning of the curriculum has become increasingly crucial in curriculum development.

2.2 Intelligent guidance of learners' experiences

The focus of curriculum development lies entirely in education and cultivation of learners. So if the guidance of learners can be arranged more reasonably, scientifically and effectively, the curriculum development can be greatly improved.

Teaching activities and arrangements should be focused on learners themselves more. All the subject settings and curriculum design should consider learners' needs, background, their learning experiences, interest and their all-round abilities to be developed. The intelligent guidance of learners' experiences can foster their ability to learn independently and spontaneously acquire knowledge, and this kind of ability is most important for learners' nowadays.

In the process of teaching, teachers should know well and understand learners, pay attention to each specific learner and study the learners' knowledge and experience background, their needs, ability level, intelligence type and learning style. Teaching should be based on learners' existing knowledge and experience, and they are given free choices about what they

want to learn more deeply. A variety of development platforms and channels for teaching should be carefully designed, and various teaching methods should be adopted to provide a suitable teaching for learners. Teachers should constantly explore and improve teaching methods, more flexible teaching approaches should be used in class to better mobilize learners' interest in learning and get learners better involved in class [3]. Moreover, the interaction with learners should be enhanced in class, such as speech, discussion, questioning and answering, role-play and so on. Furthermore, teachers should create different learning environments and make full use of a variety of teaching resources to enable learners to have a real and wide learning experiences.

The physical and mental development of learners is important. Teachers should strive to not only make learners acquire higher knowledge and thinking ability through courses, but also guide them to learn to live, develop and innovate within the learning process. The aim should be to equip learners with the characteristic qualities necessary for comprehensive development, but also teach the learners learn to respect, care, inherit the tradition, and learn the civilization.

In conclusion, learners' great benefit and achievement are the best proof for the development of curriculum.

2.3 Meaningful appraisal

To know the achievement and effect of the curriculum implementation, and to know if the curriculum objectives have been achieved are the significance of curriculum evaluation and assessment. Only when meaningful appraisal is made, the curriculum can be developed with the help of the assessment outcomes.

Assessment involves gathering evidence and data on students' learning performance and making judgments about learners' knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge so as to make improvement where necessary. According to educational standards and curriculum evaluation criteria, curriculum compilation and curriculum implementation should be valued both in quality and in quantity. The aims of assessment are to improve learning and teaching as well as to recognize the achievement of students. Besides, assessment will closely align with the curriculum design, the curriculum aims, the learning targets and objectives as well as the learning processes.

There are several ways of assessments to reflect how the teaching and learning have been implemented. To achieve this goal, schools are encouraged to employ both formative and summative assessment. Through an on-going evaluation of learners' performance and abilities, formative assessment helps to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses, and provides them with timely feedback and guidance. It also enables teachers to review and improve their teaching plans and strategies. Formative assessment should not solely be the teacher's responsibility. Learners should also be encouraged to take charge of their own learning by practising self- and peer- assessment. Summative assessment seeks to evaluate learners' performance and abilities at the end of a period of time. It provides a comprehensive picture of students' learning progress during the period and helps teachers check whether the key aspects of the learning targets and objectives have been achieved. Schools might consider adopting a variety of activities which can contribute to either formative or summative assessment, such as discussions, presentations, written classroom assignments, performances, essays, projects, portfolios and so on.

For the development of curriculum, new mode of assessment should be innovated into real situation. It is necessary to highlight the developmental and motivational functions of appraisal, attach importance to the evaluation of students' learning potential on the promotion of students' learning and full development. It is also necessary to arouse students' initiative to participate in the assessment, change a unified evaluation subject into a diversified one.

If all the meaningful appraisals can be implemented properly and effectively, the curriculum will greatly and effectively evolve and progress based on these assessments.

3 Conclusion

Curriculum development is the process of creating and designing an educational curriculum that includes the material, learning objectives, instructional practices, and assessment methods tailored to a specific course. It entails careful consideration of many elements, in which the three main aspects play more crucial role. Curriculum planning is the overall plan of curriculum setting and teaching arrangement according to the educational objectives. Intelligent guidance of learners' experiences is the prerequisite of the curriculum development, and all the curriculum arrangements should be focused on learners themselves more, which can meet their needs and achieve the curriculum objectives to the greatest extent. Meaningful appraisal can gauge the success and impact of the curriculum, verifying the attainment of curriculum objectives. When the three main elements are analyzed and arranged well and scientifically, curriculum development can be more effective and comprehensive.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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