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**CC 4: CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL**

# UNIT –VI: TYPES OF CURRICULUM DESIGNS

# REPRESENTATIVE CURRICULUM DESIGNS:

Curriculum components can be organized in numerous ways. However, all curriculum designs are modifications and/or integrations of three basic design types:

1. subject-centered designs;
2. (2) learner-centered designs;
3. (3) problem-centered designs.

Each category comprises several examples Subject-centered designs, broad field designs, and correlation designs. Learner-centered designs are those identified as child-centered designs, experience designs, romantic/radical designs, and humanistic designs. Problem-centered designs consider life situations, core designs, and social problem/ deconstructionist designs.

**Subject-Centered Design:**

Subject-centered designs are by for the most popular and widely used curriculum designs. This is because knowledge and content are well accepted as integral parts of the curriculum. Schools have a strong history of academic rationalism; furthermore, the materials available for school use also reflect content organization.

The category of subject-centered designs has the most classifications of any of the designs. This richness may result from our greater understanding of knowledge, or from the very strong tradition knowledge or content has in our culture. Concepts central to a culture are more highly elaborated than peripheral ones. In our culture, content is central to schooling; we thus have many concepts to depict our diverse organizations.

**Leaner-Centered Design:**

All curricularists are concerned with creating curricula that are valuable to students. In response to these educational planners who consider that in creating curricula of value one must emphasize subject matter, educators early in this century asserted that students are the center or focus of the program. Supporters of this posture, largely progressives, advocated what have come to be called learner-centered designs.

**Experience-Centered Designs:**

Experience-centered curriculum designs closely resembled the child-centered designs in that they used the concerns of children as the basis for organizing the children’s school world. However, they differed from child-centered designs in their view that the interests and needs of children cannot be anticipated and, therefore, a curriculium framework cannot be planned for all children. After the children arrived at school, programs could then be created that were geared to their unique interests. The needs and interests of the children would determine the actual curriculum. Growth and learning were considered to be completely dependent on the active participation of children in activities that were congruent with their needs. Subjects were only furnished to help children solve problems of their own choosing. This notion-that a curriculum could not be preplanned, that everything had to be done “on the spot” by each teacher reacting to each child-made this design almost impossible to implement-cognitively, affectively, emotionally, and socially.

Those favoring the child-centered or experience-centered curriculum place heavy emphasis on the learner’s interests. Pupil’s interests have received much attention throughout this century. However, cautions about relying solely on children’s interests have been made frequently. Harold Rugg and Ann Shumaker wrote in 1928, “We do not dare leave longer to chance-to spontaneous, overt symptoms of interest on the part of occasional pupils-the solution of this important and difficult problem of construction of a curriculum for maximum growth.

In 1934 Dewey noted that “interests” had come to be equated with choices delineated by the child. Dewey said that some of the current thinking was transferring the responsibility of creating curricula from educators to children. Educators needed to be aware that children’s interests tended to be transitory or accidental, rather than enduring and of major significance. The teacher was responsible for identifying and cultivating children’s interests, even forming new ones, that were prized by the community and compatible with the evolution of society. Many years later, Boyed Bode cautioned that it was major educational folly to build the curriculum on the quickesand of student’s ephemeral interests. It seems that many current advocates of this design have forgotten or chosen ignore these cautions.

Many current advocates of the learner-centered design have however, taken an adversarial position when considering t6heir design in relation to the subject-center design camp. They assume an either-or posture-one either supports a design with content at the center or a design with the child at the center. Many have counseled against such an either-or stance. For example, Dewey pointed out that there were fallacies in both camps. The learner was not a “tabula rasa,” a passive receiver of established subject matter content. Neither was a the learner “the starting point, the center, and the end” of school activity.

Dewey argued that educators had to attend to the subject matter of the curriculum. The various studies “embody the cumulative outcomes of the efforts, the strivings, and the successes of the human race generation after generation. But, educators could not ignore the child in curriculum design because the child had to be viewed as fluent, embryonic, and vital: “Abandon the notion of subject-matter as something fixed and ready-made in itself, outside the child’s experience; cease thinking of the child’s experience as something hard and fast…. and we realize that the child and the curriculum are simply two limits which define a single process. Just as two points define a straight line.

Several current curriculum specialists have argued that we need to meld our curricular concerns as relating to both the subject matter and content of the curriculum and the child and his or her experiences. In their definition, Tanner and Tanner identify the curriculum as the reconstruction f knowledge and experience, systematically developed under the auspices of the school. Other curriculum reformers have translated the ideas of the experience movement into courses emphasizing touching, feeling, and Gestalt psychology. Still others have emphasized life experiences, with credit for working in community-based and career-based activities intended to prepare students for adult responsibility and work and courses that deal with social problems and personal experiences.

**Life- Situations Design:**

The persistent life-situations design is perhaps the best-known variation of the problem-centered designs. Interest in this curriculum approach can be traced to the nineteenth century and to Herbert Spencer’s seminal essay “What Knowledge Is of Most World?” and society. A similar advocacy statement was made in 1918 by the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. During the 1930s and 1940s this viewpoint was expressed in an approach that addressed adolescent needs. The life-situations design as we know it today, proposed by Florence Stratemeyer and her associates in the early years after World War II, was based on a principle derived from studies on the transfer of learning. Stratemeyer and her colleagues concluded that students would find their school learning more meaningful, and would thus be able to directly apply it to life, if the problems they studied in school were in fact similar to those they faced out of school.

Using such a design, based on recurring life situations, educators could assist students in broadening their insights and deepening their generalizations about problems relating to the “real” world. Stratemeyer created a master list of persistent life situations for educators to follow. The key aspects of this list are presented next.

1. Situation calling for growth in individual capacities
2. Health
3. Intellectual power
4. Responsibility
5. Aesthetic expression and appreciation
6. situations calling for growth in social participation
7. Person-to-person relationships
8. Group membership
9. Intergroup relationships
10. Situations calling for growth in ability to deal with environmental factors and forces.
11. Natural phenomena
12. Technological phenomena
13. Economic-social-political structure and forces.

In addition to drawing on these persistent life situations, Stratemeyer believed that the needs of children and youth also supplied a basis for determining the curriculum,. But Stratemeyer, like Kilpatrick, noted that not all children’s interests were of equal value. Good curriculum planners had to distinguish between superficial interests and those useful in fostering the development of meaningful generalizations. It was considered preferable for the problems studied to be based on the children’s immediate concerns rather on adult’s views of what was necessary. In this respect, the design proposed by Stratemeyer was child-centered.

One of the strengths of the life-situations design is its focus on the problem-solving procedures for learning. Process and content are effectively integrated into the curricular experience. Some cities point out that the students do not learn subject matter. However, proponents are quick to counter that the design draws heavily from content, and from traditional content at that. What makes the design unique is that the content is organized in ways that allow students to clearly view problem areas.

Another strong feature of this design is that it utilizes the past and current experiences of learners as a means of getting them to analyze the basic areas of living. In this respect, the design is very different from the activities/experience design, when uses the learner’s felt needs and interests as the sole basis for content and experience selection. The life-situations design uses student’s immediate concerns, as well as pressing immediate problems in the large society, as a starting point.

The design has definite strengths. It presents subject matter in an integrated form by cutting across the separate subjects and centering on related categories of social life. Because it centers on social problems and personal concerns, it encourages students to learn and apply problem-solving procedures. The linking of subject matter to real situations increases the relevance of the curriculum.

But, like the previous designs, life-situation designs have deficiencies and challenges. Perhaps the greatest challenge is to determine what are the scope and sequence of the essential areas of living? Are the major activities of the current time also going to be the essential activities of future times?

Another criticism of this design has been that it does not adequately expose students to their cultural heritage. Moreover, it tends to indoctrinate youth into the existing conditions and thus perpetuates the social status quo. However, if students are educated to be critical of their social situations, then not the status quo but rather intelligent processing of the social scene is fostered rather than adherence to the status quo.

There are always some who point our that the life-situations design cannot be mounted by teachers for they lack adequate preparation for it. Others argue that textbooks and other teaching materials inhibit the implementation of this design. Furthermore, many citizens are uncomfortable with it because it departs from the curricular tradition maintained by colleges and universities.