The Humanistic Curriculum

The theoretical view that
the function of the curriculum is to provide
each learner with “intrinsically rewarding
experiences that contribute to personal
liberation and development.”

Various Conceptions to Curriculum Development (Foundations)

• Humanistic
• Social Reconstructionist
• Systematic
• Academic

Humanists believe . . . . .

• The goals of education are related to the ideals of personal growth, integrity, and autonomy.
• They expect healthier attitudes toward self, peers, and learning are among.
• The ideal of self-actualization is at the heart of the humanistic curriculum
Humanists believe....

- A person who exhibits this quality is not only **coolly cognitive** but also developed in aesthetic and moral ways
  - a person would perform good works and have good character.
- The humanist views actualization growth as a basic need.
  - Each learner has “a self” that must be uncovered, built up, taught.

Humanist Role of the Teacher

- Provides warmth and nurtures emotions while continuing to function as a resource and facilitator.
- Presents materials imaginatively and creates challenging situations.
- Motivates their students through mutual trust.
- Encourages a positive student-teacher relationship by teaching out of their own interests and commitments while holding to the belief that each child can learn.

Are you a “Humanist Teacher”? 

In touch with yourself and your students?
The Humanistic Teacher

as seen by students

• Listens comprehensively to the student’s view of reality.
  – “She cares about my feelings and understands what I wish to say when I have difficulty in expressing it.”
• Respects the student.
  – “He used my idea in studying the problem.”
• Is natural and authentic, not putting on appearances.
  – “She lets us know what she feels and thinks and is not afraid to reveal her own doubts and insecurities.”

Two prevalent forms of humanistic curriculum

• Confluent
• Consciousness

Confluent

• Integrates the affective domain (emotions, attitudes, values) with the cognitive domain (intellectual knowledge and abilities).
  – As an add-on curriculum -- emotional dimensions are added to conventional subject matter so that there is personal meaning to what is learned.
  – Confluentists do not downplay public knowledge, such as scientific information, in favor of subjective or intuitive (i.e., incorporates direct and immediate) knowledge.
Confluentists do not believe

- That the curriculum should teach students what to feel or what attitudes to have.
- Their goal is to provide students with more alternatives to choose from in terms of their own lives, to take responsibility for appreciating the choices available, and to realize that they, the learners, can indeed make choices.

Consciousness and Transcendency

- Although humanistic psychologists typically emphasize the affective and cognitive domains,
  - some humanists are interested in treating higher domains of consciousness as well.

Consciousness

- The curriculum involves not only a cognitive mode of consciousness but an intuitive receptive mode (guided fantasy and various forms of meditation).
  - For example, transcendental meditation (TM) is concerned with altering states of consciousness, voluntary control of inner states, and growth beyond the ego.
  - It has been tried as an adjunct to the high school curriculum partly because it is seen as a way to diminish drug abuse among students.
**TM is a simple technique**

- Turns attention "inward toward the subtler levels of thought" until the mind transcends the experience of the subtlest state of thought and arrives at the source of thought.
- This expands the conscious mind and at the same time brings it in contact with the creative intelligence that gives rise to every thought.
- TM has been used to reach some common curriculum goals, such as reduction of social tension, increased learning ability, and improved athletic performance.

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**Carl Rogers has provided a framework for a humanistic curriculum**

- He was a third force psychologist who identified conditions that enable humans to grow and seek fulfillment, showing the importance of emotional relationships where participants have positive regard and empathize understandings for each other.

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**Carl Rogers confirmed that learning best takes place when**

- External threats to self are reduced to a minimum.
- Students choose and pursue their own projects, selecting resources and procedures but accepting responsibility for the consequences.
- If independence of mind, creativity, and self-confidence are the goals, self-evaluation and self-criticism precedes evaluation by others.
- Places emphasis on learning how to learn. Learning how to learn means being open to experience and to change.
Criticisms of the Humanistic Curriculum

- Critics maintain that humanists prize their methods, techniques, and experiences instead of appraising them in terms of consequences for learners.
  - Humanists have been lax in seeing the long term effects of their programs.
  - Their uses of emotionally charged practices such as sensitivity training and encounter groups can be psychologically or emotionally harmful to some students.

- Other critics maintain that the humanist is not concerned enough about the experience of the individual.
  - Some programs appear to demand uniformity of students and appear to regard open questioning as a dangerous deviance, getting in the way of development.
  - Although humanists say that their curriculum is individualistic, every student in a given classroom is actually exposed to the same stimuli.

- Critics also charge that humanists give undue emphasis to the individual.
  - They would like humanists to be more responsible to the needs of society as a whole.
How do you see the humanistic approach to curriculum?

- Do you support a curriculum that has the goal of supporting increased human potential and self-worth as ends -- "Be all you can be"?

- Are you open to what appears to be bizarre procedures if they increase learning, such as exploring the senses through touch and feel exercises and emphasizing the sensual, if not the sexual.

Think subject matter should be taught with a view to enlightenment of the person.

- Would you entrust your child's education to a teacher who asked him or her to close her eyes and "imagine" . . . And played soft, soothing music while they did this exercise.

- Believe that school should be "fun and enjoyable" or "challenging and hard"?

You want our future entrusted to children who learn to "solve the world’s problems of health, hunger, war and abuse" or "learn math, science, writing, and history."

- How comfortable are you with having your child in classroom that is "self-directed" where your child chooses what to learn and how to do it?
Most would agree that . . .

- Listening, self-evaluation, creativity, openness to new experiences, and goal setting are important curriculum goal areas.
- Learners have a real concern about the meaning of life, and curriculum developers should be responsive to that concern.
- Putting feelings and facts together makes good sense.
  - Studies of classroom interaction show that only 1% of instructional time assesses student feelings about what they are learning.

We should also help learners acquire different ways of knowing.

- Still . . . few persons would want the humanistic curriculum to be the only one available or to be mandated for all.
- We have much to learn before we can develop curricula that will help students become self-directed.
  - Even most companies are uncomfortable doing that for their workers.

Our best thinking today suggests that self-direction (student participation in decisions about what and how to learn) may follow from a climate of trust.

- Through challenge, choice, novelty, fantasies, surprise, functionality, and other features of the humanistic curriculum, teachers cultivate students as whole persons who care about others and pursue their own dreams not just follow the trajectories set by government and employers.
Consider these choices...

- Capitalism and scientism through mandated institutionalized curriculum aimed at "filling empty vessels."

- Or a humanistic curriculum that "ignites the fires in learners."

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**THE SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTIONIST CURRICULUM**

Focused on the social, political, and economic development of society.
• Optimistic social reconstructionists are convinced that education can effect social change, citing, for example, literacy campaigns that have contributed to successful political revolutions.

• On the other hand pessimists doubt the ability of the curriculum to change existing social structures but want the curriculum to be a vehicle for fostering social discontent.
  – They think learners should understand how the curriculum is used to consolidate power and to define society.

• The premises of social reconstruction and the directions taken by different social reconstructionists:
  – revolution
  – critical inquiry
  – futurism.

The primary purpose of the social reconstructionist curriculum...

• To confront the learner with the many severe problems that humankind faces.
  – Social reconstructionists believe these problems are not the exclusive concern of "social studies" but of every discipline, including economics, aesthetics, chemistry, and mathematics.
  – This is now in a critical period, they claim. The crisis is universal, and the widespread nature of the crisis must be emphasized in the curriculum.
The social reconstructionist curriculum has no universal objectives and content.

- The first year of such a curriculum might be devoted to formulating goals for political and economic reconstruction. Activities related to this objective might include the following:
  - a critical survey of the community (collect information on local patterns of savings and expenditures)
  - a study relating the local economy to national and worldwide situations
  - a study treating the influence of historic causes and trends on the local economic situation
  - an examination of political practices in relation to economic factors

- Objectives in later years of the curriculum might include
  - the identification of problems, methods, needs, and goals in science and art
  - the evaluation of the relationship between education and human relations
  - the identification of aggressive strategies for effecting change.

Role of the Teacher

- Relate national, world, and local purposes to the students' goals.
  - Students can thus use their interests to help find solutions to the social problems emphasized in their classes.
  - If a community wants to encourage participation of different ethnic groups in public meetings, for example, a foreign language class could help facilitate this participation by interpreting.
• The teacher stresses cooperation with the community and its resources.
  – Students may spend time away from the school participating in community health projects
  – Interconnections between art and science and art and economics might be strengthened as the art student looks at art in home and city planning, contrasts unhealthy communities with "ideal garden cities," and attempts to see how the desire for business profits affects the quality of life.

Paulo Freire (1921 - 1997)

• A Brazilian educationalist, has left a significant mark on thinking about progressive practice. His 1970 book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is currently one of the most quoted educational texts (especially in Latin America, Africa and Asia).

Social reconstructionists draw from the theory and practice of the late Paulo Freire.

Freire’s “Conscientization”

• The process by which individuals, not as recipients but as active learners, achieve a deep awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their ability to transform that reality.

• It means enlightening people about the obstacles that prevent them from having a clear perception of reality.
Obstacles

- One is a standardized way of thinking and acting.
  - According to the perspectives received daily from the communications media rather than getting other views and attending to local realities.
- Dehumanizing structures that control learning such as schools that are instruments for maintaining the status quo and political leaders who mediate between the masses and the elite while keeping the masses in a dependent state.

Conscientization means . . .

- Helping persons apprehend the origins of facts and problems in their situations rather than attributing them to a superior power or to their own "natural" incapacity.
- Unless students see these facts objectively, they will accept the situation apathetically, believing themselves incapable of affecting their destiny.

The Neo-Marxists

- According to the neo-Marxist, the older reconstructionists failed to recognize that oppression and exploitation are a fundamental characteristic of class structure in the United States and cannot be altered by tinkering with the school.
• Neo-Marxists advocated that curriculum specialists recognize that the success of the schools is tied to conditions in the larger society.

• Just as conflicts over the curriculum arise outside the school, so the solutions to these problems require efforts by the larger society.
  – Parents, concerned citizens, organized labor, students, and other groups must be involved in studying, for example, the prevailing patterns of financing, ways to create more jobs, and the possibility of redistributing income.

Critical Theory Against Reproductive Knowledge

• Recently, Michael Apple and Henry Giroux have argued that the knowledge "reproduced" in schools creates a stratified social order and perpetuates the values of dominant social class interests.
  – Only rarely has the curriculum reflected on what is happening outside of the school, and instead it embeds a restricted range of social and economic values.
  – They believe that the curriculum should be broadened to include community action.

Evidence in support of the "reproductive" theory of curriculum

• The knowledge taught in school perpetuates existing political and economic structures.
• Jean Anyon collected data on school knowledge in New Jersey elementary schools in contrasting social class settings.
  – Her data suggest that while topics and materials are similar among working-class, middle-class, affluent, and elite schools, dramatic differences exist in students' experience of the curricula in these schools.
In the working-class schools

- Students never were taught their own history—the history of the working class—and the curriculum emphasized rote behaviors rather than creative thinking.
- The dominant theme was student resistance.
- The teacher had to discipline the class physically at times in order to impose the curriculum, which consisted only of the basics and worksheets.

Middle-Class School Students

- Viewed knowledge as facts and generalizations which could be exchanged for college entrance or a better job.
- Possibility was the dominant theme.

Affluent School Students

- Perceived knowledge as a personal activity related to things or ideas.
- They were taught ways to use ideas for their own purposes.
- The dominant theme in the affluent school was individualization because these students thought for themselves and engaged in creative projects and personal discovery.
- Their schooling stressed individual values over collective ones.
The Executive Elite School

- Excellence was the theme.
- Students viewed knowledge as the result of rational rules and consensus by experts, not personal discovery.
- Children were provided with socially prestigious subject matter and were given analytical insights about the social system.
- They were being prepared to govern, to exercise and exert power.

Futurologists

- Advocate making deliberate choices about the world of the future (Utopia).
- They study trends, estimate the social consequences foreshadowed by the trends, and then attempt to promote probable futures seen as "good" and prevent those seen as "bad."
- Generally, futurologists do not attempt to predict what is going to happen in 10 to 15 years but rather attempt to decide on what they want to happen so that they can then make more intelligent choices.
- The late Harold G. Shane, a social reconstructionist used future planning as a basis for curriculum making.
  - Urged a program of planning the future, not planning for the future.
  - He stressed the power of persons to shape their own destiny and to believe that they are not bound to an inescapable future to which they must conform.
Typical Futurists' Recommendations

• In their futuristic curriculum, reconstructionists focus on:
  – The exploitation of resources
  – Pollution of the air and water
  – Warfare
  – The effect of the population increase
  – The unequal use of natural resources
  – Propaganda, especially in the media
  – The need for self-control in the interests of one's fellow humans.

Social Adaptation versus Social Reconstruction

• Both social adaptation and social reconstruction derive aims and content from an analysis of the society that the school is to serve.

• Curriculum development in response to social needs, such as AIDS and sex education, parenting programs, and antidrug campaigns, is often more adaptive than reconstructive.

• The social adaptation curriculum represents a mechanism for adjusting students to what some groups believe to be an appropriate response to critical needs within society.

  – Social adaptation differs from social reconstruction in that usually no attempt is made to develop a critical consciousness of social problems and to do something about them.

  – The approach of social adaptationists is to give students information and prescriptions for dealing with situations as defined rather than to seek a fundamental change in the basic structure of the society underlying the problems.
CRITICISMS OF SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTIONISM

• Reconstruction is appealing -- it is based on faith in the ability of humankind to form a more perfect world.
  – It claims to use the best of science in determining consequences and suggesting possibilities.

• Among the difficulties of reconstruction, however, is the fact that:
  – scientific findings permit varied interpretations
  – do not prescribe how everyone should respond to the findings.

Conclusion

• Social reconstructionists are concerned with the relation of the curriculum to society as it should be as opposed to society as it is.

• Many tenets of this group are consistent with our highest ideals, such as the right of those with a minority viewpoint to persuade those of a majority viewpoint, and with faith in the intelligence of the common people and in their ability to shape their own destiny in desired directions.

• The reconstructionist commitment to particular social ideas determined by "social consensus" may not be readily accepted in an individualistic United States.

• We can expect accelerated curriculum development along reconstructionist lines whenever a resolution of conflict in values is needed.
  – Such a need often exists in multicultural neighborhoods. Cultural groups frequently have different interpretations of history, different conceptions of nature, different levels of aspiration, and different views of social conduct.
• It is difficult to implement social reconstruction in state schools in which conservation of the political status quo is the rule.

• Social reconstruction is not viable as long as teachers view teaching as subject matter transmission rather than personal and social transformation.

• Professional teacher organizations tend to clash with reconstructionists favoring local community groups and parents.

• Rivalry between professional teacher and parent power movements regarding what should be taught and how it should be taught has already surfaced.

Assignment -- Next Time

• Annotation -- (Blue) Your second due
• Read Chapters 3 and 4 in your text
  • Be prepared to discuss questions 3 and 5 on page 58.
  • Be prepared to discuss questions 2 and 4 on page 84.
    – Be sure to read the chapter before considering its questions.

Sample of Unit One
Due June 19th

• Let's look at a Unit Sample
A Curriculum Unit in this course must include the following parts:

• Unit: (Title)
• Goals: (Of the Unit)
• Rationale of the Unit: (Answers question Why?)
• Objectives for the Unit: (Tasks or competencies)
• Possible Unit Activities: (For teaching the content)
• References: (APA style)

Unit and Goals

UNIT: Spreadsheet

GOALS:
1. To develop the student's skills in the use of a spreadsheet to solve practical problems.
2. To provide the student with the ability to effectively solve repetitive work tasks and educational calculation tasks.
3. To realize that many real-life problems must be solved by a trial and error, elimination and iteration process.

• Unit is just the title of the unit.
• Goals of the unit are stated in behavioral terms.

Rationale for the Unit

RATIONALE FOR UNIT:
The use of computers to complete calculations has been the major driving force in their development. The use of a particular language has been a requirement for the solution of problems, and the growth of spreadsheet software has made the programming of the solution into a virtual problem. The student will increase their ability to use and solve complex real-world calculations in completing classroom and work place tasks. The use of a spreadsheet allows the student to import data and calculate results into word processing or presentation software packages without having to recheck the data entry. Conditional statements are used for template allowing constants to be selected from tables and appropriate equations used for the problem solution.

• Explain, in narrative form) why the unit is needed.
Objectives for the Unit

OBJECTIVES FOR UNIT:

1. Use spreadsheet to solve technical problems.
2. Use a spreadsheet to create templates that can be used to solve typical problems in the workplace.
3. Create tables of constants commonly used to solve problems.
4. Use basic tools and formulas to solve problems that require different solution methods for different conditions. Such as the quadratic equation.

- Task or competency statements that will be used to develop performance objectives and subsequently lesson plans.
- Written in behavioral terms.

Possible Unit Activities

POSSIBLE UNIT ACTIVITIES:

1. Create a table of experimental data and perform simple calculations.
2. Create a scatter graph of the fuel economy of a vehicle versus its weight, document the graph and the results.
3. Estimate fuel economy scatter graph to change the graph, y-intercept, and to review any legend for better understanding.
4. Apply a trend line to the scatter graph of fuel economy and use this predict the fuel economy of a vehicle.
5. Apply more advanced functions to calculate results from a collection of data.

- Suggested instructional activities that can be used in lesson plans.

References for Unit

REFERENCES:


- One or more required. APA Style.
- Where lesson planners and instructors can go to get the details for planning lessons.
APA Style

- APA (American Psychological Association) is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences.
  - Also: The Owl at Purdue
    - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Time to go home . . .