CURRICULUM MODELS
An Introduction
An Overview of Curriculum Models

 ✓ Ornstein and Hunkins (2009, p15) contend that curriculum development encompasses how a ‘curriculum is planned, implemented and evaluated, as well as what people, processes and procedures are involved.’

 ✓ Curriculum models help designers to systematically and transparently map out the rationale for the use of particular teaching, learning and assessment approaches.
Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) suggest that although curriculum development models are technically useful, they often overlook the human aspect such as the personal attitudes, feelings, values involved in curriculum making.

Therefore they are not a recipe and should not be a substitute for using your professional and personal judgment on what is a good approach to enhancing student learning.
A commonly described, maybe slight simplistic version of two polarised curriculum models are those referred to by many authors as the ‘Product Model’ and the ‘Process Model’.

Neary (2003a, p39) describes these as one which emphasizes ‘plans and intentions (The Product Model) and one which emphasizes activities and effects’ (The Process Model)

(See diagram next slide).
Product vs Process Model of Curriculum Development

**Product model**
- Teacher Control
  - Plans and intentions
  - Use of behavioural language
  - Making assessment precise
  - Structure
  - Choice through electives
  - Planned by teacher
- Student Control
  - Social and life skills

**Process model**
- Teacher Control
  - Learning activities
  - More student choice
  - Environment
  - Social and life skills
- Student Control
  - Social and life skills
PRODUCT MODEL

• The product model can be traced to the work of the writings of the theorists Tyler (1949) & Bloom (1965) who greatly influenced curriculum development in America (O’Neill, 2010).

• Also known as behavioural objectives model;

• Model interested in product of curriculum;

• It has been valuable in developing and communicating transparent outcomes to the student population and has moved emphasis away from lists of content.
4 FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

- What are aims and objectives of curriculum?
- Which learning experiences meet these aims and objectives?
- How can the extent to which these aims and objectives have been met be evaluated?
- How can these learning experiences be organised?

(Adapted from Tyler 1949)
ADVANTAGES OF PRODUCT MODEL

- Avoidance of vague general statements of intent
- Makes assessment more precise
- Helps to select and structure content
- Makes teachers aware of different types and levels of learning involved in particular subjects
- Guidance for teachers and learners about skills to be mastered
CRITICISMS OF PRODUCT MODEL

- At lower levels, behavioural objectives may be trite and unnecessary.
- Difficult to write satisfactory behavioural objectives for higher levels of learning.
- Specific behaviours not appropriate for affective domain.
- Discourages creativity for learner and teacher.
- Enshrines psychology and philosophy of behaviourism.
- Curriculum too subject and exam bound.
PROCESS MODEL

Focuses on

- teacher activities and teacher’s role
- Student and learner activities (perhaps most important feature)
- Conditions in which learning takes place

Key thinker Stenhouse (1975)
- Emphasis on means rather than ends
- Learner should have part in deciding nature of learning activities
- More individualised atmosphere
- Assumption that learner makes unique response to learning experiences
ADVANTAGES OF PROCESS MODEL

- Emphasis on active roles of teachers and learners
- Emphasis on learning skills
- Emphasis on certain activities as important in themselves and for “life”
- Knight (2001) expresses the advantages of a more process model of curriculum planning in comparison to the product.
- He notes it makes sense to plan curriculum in this intuitive way, reassured by the claim from complexity theory that what matters is getting the ingredients, the processes, messages and conditions right, and trusting that good outcomes will follow.
DISADVANTAGES OF PROCESS MODEL

- Neglect of considerations of appropriate content
- Difficulty in applying approach in some areas

Academic Classical humanist
Subject-based
(Content driven)

Utilitarian Technocratic Vocational (objectives-driven)

Progressive Developmental pedagogy (process-driven)
Academic Classical Humanist Model

- Autonomy means learning seen as individual process
- Real element of autonomy is academic freedom achieved when one achieves expertise and masters discipline
- Process naturally disenfranchises those without expertise
- Elite decide what elements of knowledge constitute cultural capital and operate processes that admit or qualify those aspiring to join elite
Academic Classical Humanist Model (Cont’d)

- Assessment: norm referenced, graded, externally imposed
- Teacher: decides on and gives access to knowledge which counts; ensures standards; transmits approved knowledge
Utilitarian Technocratic Vocational Model

- Autonomy expressed in terms of consumer choice rather than pedagogy
- Students exercise choices over courses or modules in market
- Assessment: competencies, traditionally single-level, criterion-referenced summative, with competencies broken down into many elements
- Teacher: guides students as to what to study, which commodity to choose
Progressive Developmental Pedagogy Model

- Autonomy means self-directed learning
- Students negotiate with teachers to take control of learning
- Negotiation of tasks, participative pedagogic style
- Assessment: formative, personal, course-work based and open-ended
- Teacher: partners with student; shares in decisions about what to study and when
Academic/Utilitarian share:

- View of knowledge or learning experience as fixed entity determined by authority
- Student bound by larger essentials (subject knowledge or needs of employment)
Academic/Progressive share:

- Antipathy to marketisation and instrumentalism in curriculum
Utilitarian/Progressive share:

- Individual student ownership and responsibility for learning
- Broadly egalitarian approach to education

(Ideological rivalries and alliances between 3 curricular models based loosely on Bates I, Bloomer M, Hodkinson P & Yeomans D (1998))
4 CONCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM

- The official curriculum
- The hidden curriculum
- The observed curriculum
- The curriculum-as-experienced

Pollard & Triggs (1997)
THE OFFICIAL CURRICULUM

- “A planned course of study”
- Explicitly stated programme of learning
- States intended curriculum content
- Structures sequence and progression, framing content and course activities
- Designed to challenge students and match learning needs
HIDDEN CURRICULUM

- All that is learnt during school/college activities that is not a designated part of official curriculum
- What is “picked up” about eg role of teacher/learner, status, attitudes to learning
- Implicit, embedded in taken-for-granted procedures and materials
- May be unrecognised and often examined
- Can have profound effect on self image on students, and attitudes to education/other social groups
OBSERVED CURRICULUM

- What can be seen as taking place in the classroom
- May be different from intended official curriculum
CURRICULUM-AS-EXPERIENCED

- The parts of the curriculum (official and hidden) that actually connect meaningfully with students
- Arguably only this aspect which has educational impact – rest is often forgotten!
VOCATIONAL CURRICULUM

Characterised as:

- Experientially based in terms of content and teaching method
- Directly relevant to student needs
- Emphasis on core skills

Marsh, 1997
VOCATIONAL CURRICULUM

Orientation:

- Tend to be explicit in outcomes
- Selection of content has input from industry, government, community as well as educators
- Emphasis on student-centred learning
- Typically based on small units, separately assessed/certificated
ACADEMIC CURRICULUM 16-19 (Secondary)

- Perceived as educationally elite, high status, traditionally thought of as more challenging
- Classroom based
- Focus on knowledge of given subject area determined by subject experts
- Emphasis on end of course external exams
- At advanced level, free choice of subjects
- “A-level” curriculum dependent on institution
- Can reinforce inequalities

Young & Leney (1997)
COMMUNITY EDUCATION

- Traditionally cultural and recreation subjects
- Often held in community venues
- Voluntary attendance
- Usually non-accredited, although accreditation increasing for funding purposes


