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Criteria for the selection of content in curriculum development

The content and objectives are interdependent and constitute a major dimension of curriculum development. Generally content refers to subject matter or the compendium of facts, concepts, generalization, principles and theories. By content we imply learning experiences besides subject matter. The curriculum content should enable students to gain and apply knowledge in day-to-day life. The content selected should contribute to the student's knowledge or understanding of the reality of human life.

Let us talk the criteria of content selection in detail. At the macro level the criteria for the selection of content should be based on the socio-political and educational philosophy of the society or the nation. At the micro level the criteria should suit the specific objectives set for meeting the student's needs. Some of the criteria for content selection are discussed as follows:

- 1. Self-sufficiency:** This criterion helps the students to attain maximum self-sufficiency and that too in the most economical manner i.e., economy of teaching efforts and educational resources, student's efforts and extent of generalization of subject matter. In other words, we can say that the content should help the student become self-reliant and self-sufficient. This criterion is the means by which learners can actualize their potential and crystallize their identities.
- 2. Validity:** Validity relates to the authenticity of the content selected. The content selected should be valid to the extent that it flows from and supports the goals and objectives of curriculum. The content should be usable in day-to-day life. In other words validity refers to the extent to which the content adequately covers the subject matter of the course and the objectives specified for the course of study.
- 3. Utility:** The utility criterion is concerned with the usefulness of the content. The usefulness can be interpreted in different ways. For example, the content learned by the students should be useful in his/her job situations, or how content enables the individual to gain an accurate perception of his/her self-identity and to attain meaning in his/her life or content has direct application to ongoing life and to social and political issues.

4. Learn Ability: This criterion relates the optimal placement and appropriate organization and sequencing of content. The selected content should not be out of the range of students experiences, intellectual abilities etc., In other words, the content should be such that it can be perceived, understood and assimilated by the learners for whom it is intended.

5. Feasibility: Feasibility as a criterion of content selection compels curriculum planners to analyse and examine the content in the light of the time and resources available to the students, the expertise of current staff, costs involved, the existing legislation contemporary socio-political climate, etc., despite the fact that there are several options available, the students do have limitations as far as the pace of their learning is concerned.

6. Significance: Content to be learned is significant only to the degree to which it contributes to the basic ideas, concepts, principles, generalizations, and so on, of the overall aims of the curriculum, and to the development of particular learning abilities, skills, process and attitude formation. While selecting the content it is necessary to decide which concepts and ideas connected with the learning experiences are significant. It is a difficult task. To achieve this task successfully there must be a high degree of coordination between the persons who prepare the content and the persons who teach it.

7. Relevancy of content to the present needs: The criterion of relevancy becomes more and more important as efforts are made to improve the schools and to educate a larger number of persons. We know by experience that many students do not have interest in the lessons, if the content of those lessons is not related to their current experiences. The curriculum should have a cosmopolitan orientation in order to reflect the diversities of the culture. Moreover, the teaching of subjects like social studies should be relevant to the present day events. The contents should also help in the broadening of horizons for tomorrow. Otherwise, what is being taught in the schools today will be behind the times.

8. Interest: The subject matter must create interest in the pupils. It should satisfy the needs of the learner. This criterion will be fulfilled when the subject matter in different subjects is useful in solving pupils, problems or in fulfilling pupils goals. The content of the curriculum must be selected with students interests in mind. The criterion of students interests should be weighted and adjusted to allow for students maturity, their prior experiences, the educational and social value of their interests and the way they are expected to interact within society.



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9. Orientation of democratic values: This criterion implies that education will help in providing intelligent direction of social change through the selection of curriculum content. It means that the instructional programme should focus upon the development of moral values, effective thought process the skills of democratic qualities.