Language Content

Definition of Content

• Content is defined as "Information to be learned in school, another term for knowledge (a collection of facts, concepts, generalization, principles, theories)"

• Content comes in any form (audio, text and video) and it informs, entertains, enlightens or teaches people who consume it.

- Purposes of Content

To help organize materials

To help a sequential relationship of material

To present material basic to a general understanding of a course.

To furnish a source of valuable information.

To present application

- The content is:

-United with the goals and objectives of the basic education curriculum.

-Responds to the needs of the learner.

-Includes cognitive skill and affective elements.

The content: Fully and deeply covers the essential that is of use to the learners, that is practical and achievable.

Guiding Principles in the Selection and Organization of Content

One guiding principle related to subject matter content is to observe the following qualities in the selection and organization of content:

1. **Self-sufficiency**: To help learners attain maximum self-sufficiency in the most economical manner is the main guiding principle of subject matter or content selection (Scheffler, 1970) as cited by Bilbao et al. (2008). Although the economy of learning implies less teaching effort and less use of educational resources, students gain more results. They can cope up with the learning outcomes effectively. This criterion means that students should be given a chance to experiment, observe, and do field study. This system allows them to learn independently. With this principle in mind, I suggest that for a high school curriculum or preparatory year, there should be a one-day independent learning activity each week. However, this should be carefully planned by the teacher.

When the students return, they should present outputs from the activity. Seven Criteria for the Selection of Subject- matter or Content of the Curriculum.

2. **Significance:** The subject matter or content is significant if it is selected and organized for the development of learning activities, skills, processes, and attitude. It also develops the three domains of learning namely the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills and considers the cultural aspects of the learners. Particularly, if your students come from different cultural backgrounds and races, the subject matter must be culture-sensitive. In short, select content or subject matter that can achieve the overall aim of the curriculum.

3. **Validity**: Validity refers to the authenticity of the subject matter or content you selected. Make sure that the topics are not obsolete (or old-fashioned). For example, do not include typewriting as a skill to be learned by college students. It should be about the computer or Information Technology (IT). Thus, there is a need to check regularly the subject matter or contents of the curriculum, and replace it if necessary. Do not wait for another 5 years to change it. Modern curriculum experts are after current trends, relevance and authenticity of the curriculum; otherwise, the school or the country becomes obsolete.

4. **Interest**: This criterion is true to the learner-centered curriculum. Students learn best if the subject matter is meaningful to them. It becomes meaningful if they are interested in it. However, if the curriculum is subject- centered, teachers have no choice but to finish the pacing schedule religiously and only teach what is in the book. This approach explains why many fail in the subject.

5. **Utility**: Another criterion is the usefulness of the content or subject matter. Students think that a subject matter or some subjects are not important to them. They view it useless. As a result, they do not study. Here are the questions that students often ask: Will I need the subject in my job? Will it give meaning to my life? Will it develop my potentials? Will it solve my problem? Will it be part of the test? Will I have a passing mark if I learn it? Students only value the subject matter or content if it is useful to them.

6. **Learnability**: The subject matter or content must be within the schema of the learners. It should be within their experiences. Teachers should apply theories in the psychology of learning to know how subjects are presented, sequenced, and organized to maximize the learning capacity of the students.

7. **Feasibility:** Feasibility means full implementation of the subject matter. In other words, the content is feasible in the sense that the essential content can be covered in the amount of time available for instruction. It should consider the real situation of the school, the government, and the society, in general. Students must learn within the allowable time and the use of resources available. Do not give them a topic that is impossible to finish. For example, you have only one week left to finish the unit but then, the activities may take a month for the students to complete. Thus, this requirement is not feasible.

Structuring content

There are many different ways of structuring content in courses. Some disciplines have norms or typical content progressions. For instance, in biology courses content may be presented from the smaller components and principles (such as the formation of a cell or DNA) through to the larger contexts and applications (such as understanding the various interactions within an ecosystem). In a history course, it is often most logical to proceed chronologically, following historical events and subsequent reactions to these events through time. Sometimes these disciplinary conventions for the organization of content are helpful for your students and assists students in meeting your learning objectives. However, there are also times when the conventional way of organizing information does not align with your plan for the course, the learning outcomes you have identified, and the assignment structure that you have developed.

There are a variety of ways to organize content; here are a number of common organizational systems:

chronologically

simple to complex

concrete to abstract

theory to applications

disciplinary classifications

how knowledge has been created in the field

how relationships occur in the real world

how students will use the information

how students learn

- **Determining How much Content to Include**

Deciding how much content to include in a course is often tricky. Instructors often want to include many topics, examples, and readings to expose their students to all the intricacies of the course material. However, trying to include too much content can make a course overwhelming to both the students (who are expected to master it) and the instructors (who have to present it). Focusing on the course goals and what is necessary to help students reach the learning outcomes of your class may help to remove some content, that while interesting, does not directly help students achieve those outcomes. There is no single right set of content for a course, as long as it facilitates the path toward your learning outcomes.

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