The Curriculum: Context, Change and Development

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Credit Rating  20 credits, SCQF 11

Course Description

The main aims of this course are to develop students' critical awareness of curricula and the role they play in social reproduction and cultural selection and to evaluate curriculum development in light of theories of Education.

This course introduces a variety of perspectives to understand curricula, by reflecting on sociological and philosophical approaches to international curriculum studies. Through case studies, the course will examine the change and development of curricula to locate different traditions and theories into practice. The course provides students with an opportunity to synthesise ideas, debate and evaluate a range of values, purposes and practices associated with curriculum changes within and across various global contexts.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of the principal concepts and theories relating to the study of the curriculum
- demonstrate a critical understanding of possible philosophical and social stances and the implications for curriculum change
- apply knowledge and critically analyse curriculum change in local and global contexts

Teaching

The taught component of the course has 25 hours of contact time, delivered over 10 x 2.5-hour sessions. The course will include presentations by the tutor (and occasional guest speakers), and opportunities for group/class discussion on recommended readings and topics related to weekly content. Students will be given an opportunity to work in groups to conduct and present case studies.
Assessment

Formative assessment:
During the semester, students are expected to write a 500-word essay. Students are encouraged to present a critical view and relate what they write to the course readings. Generic feedback will be provided. Students should take this opportunity to practice how to present their critical understanding of concepts and theories covered by the course.

Summative assessment:
Through group presentation and individual course work, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to apply relevant theories that are covered in the course to critically discuss the nature and/or impact of the curriculum changes and development in a chosen context.

Component 1: Group work (20%) (Week 8 and 9)

Students will be expected to work in groups to conduct and present a case study of curriculum change in a particular context.

Students are expected to give a presentation at Session 9, which will be graded. The presentation will be marked on its content and delivery.

Component 2: Individual course work (80%) – 3000 words assignment
Students will be expected to write an essay on a given topic. Students can discuss relevant issues in a particular area of education in a context with which they are familiar (e.g. pre-school curriculum in Scotland, foreign language studies in China). Cross component compensation is allowed.

Content

Week 1
Tripartite Curriculum - Formal, Informal and Hidden Curriculum
This week will provide a foundation for the course by introducing key concepts including Formal Curriculum, Informal Curriculum and Hidden Curriculum.

Week 2
Curriculum development - historical contexts
This session will introduce selected historical developments in curricula.

Week 3
Curriculum and Its Moral Visions - philosophical contexts
This session will provide source material used to justify the nature and value of a Formal Curriculum, Informal Curriculum and Hidden Curriculum.

Week 4
Curriculum and social concerns - sociological contexts
This session will discuss the role of education in the reproduction of existing values and social structures and the development of critical thinking.

Week 5
Internationalisation and Globalisation of Curriculum
This session will discuss the impact of globalisation on curriculum development.
Week 6
Case studies (1) - Curriculum in Scotland
The next two sessions will explore how a curriculum is developed in response to the topics covered in previous sessions. Session 6 will focus on curriculum development in Scotland.

Week 7
Case studies (2) – International Comparative Studies of School Curriculum
(Case may vary year to year)

Week 8
Working groups
Students will work in groups to apply appropriate concepts and theories to the interpretation of curriculum changes and development in a specific context.

Week 9
Presentations
Students will give an oral presentation of the findings of their group work.

Week 10
Conclusion
This session will draw conclusions with a discussion of fundamental issues discussed in this course.

Suggested Reading List

Core Texts:

Recommended Texts:
Additional Readings:
Bray, M and Adamson, B. 2010. Curriculum, schooling and society in Hong Kong. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press
Levinson, M. 2012. 'No Citizen Left Behind'. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press

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