



Foundational Curriculum Terms: Definitions

Curriculum

Curriculum can be divided into three categories: intended, enacted, and assessed curricula (Porter, 2004)

- Intended curriculum: the content target for the enacted curriculum, often captured in content standards or other similar documents
- Enacted curriculum: the content actually delivered during instruction in the classroom and other learning settings, and how it is taught
- Assessed curriculum: the content that is assessed to determine achievement

Instruction

Instruction can be divided into two categories: instructional practices and instructional content (Porter & Smithson, 2001)

- Instructional practices: methods by which instructional content is delivered; how content is taught
- Instructional content: enacted curriculum students are exposed to and expected to acquire; what is actually taught

Assessment

A system of processes and tools that are used to determine the extent to which students are acquiring or have acquired the knowledge and skills listed in the curriculum and delivered via instruction (Niebling, et al., 2008) In general, there are four types of assessment decisions:

- Summative: Identifies student learning at a particular point in time, usually used to make cumulative decisions about student performance over a defined period of time
- Formative: Identifies if students are currently making progress and is used to help identify if instruction needs adjustment
- Screening: Identifies potential academic and/or behavioral concerns in need of additional assessment
- Diagnostic: Helps to determine why the academic and/or behavioral needs are occurring; identifies what the student needs to learn (Iowa Department of Education, 2008)

Content

The set of topics and corresponding cognitive demands as articulated through the intended curriculum (Iowa Department of Education, 2008)



Core Content Standards

Broad statements that identify the knowledge and skills students should acquire in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies; they remain constant throughout 3-12. (Department of Education, 2008)

Benchmarks

More detailed than the Core Content Standards, these are descriptors of a learning target for a span on grades, such as grades 3-5 (Iowa Department of Education, 2008)

Essential Concepts and Skill Sets

More detailed and comprehensive than standards and benchmarks, these are descriptions of what students should know and be able to do K-12 that are detailed in the Iowa Core Curriculum

Scope and Sequence

The arrangement of content over a period of time

Instructional materials

Instructional resources (e.g., textbooks, teacher-developed activities) that represent the content in the written curriculum and are used to engage students in the learning process (Niebling, et al., 2008)

References

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