

Curriculum and Instruction

My discussion title was “Curriculum vs Instruction” in part because I was attempting to differentiate between the two for that brief response. I have substituted “vs” for “and” in this reflective essay because the two have been linked in my mind since my ED101 class decades ago.

Speaking of decades ago, the oft cited book in those formative years of my educator preparation, was Ralph Tyler’s “Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction”. And, while written in 1949, his four pillars of curriculum development have stood the test of time. They are:

- defining objectives of the learning experience
- identifying learning activities for meeting the defined objectives
- organizing learning activities for attaining the defined objectives
- evaluating and assessing the learning experiences

The scientific, assessment-based approach of Tyler has weathered the storms of reform over the ages. Sure there are many new tangents. The education reform pendulum has swung from assessment-based curriculum to performance-based, or problem solving-based, or any number of educational buzz word-based curriculums. But while curriculum development and instructional best practices have evolved in the past half-century, Tyler’s basic steps still ring true.

As I look at those four steps I tend to see the first two, *clearly stated objectives and learning opportunities that meet those goals*, as curriculum; the WHAT of education. I see the next two steps, *organizing activities and the assessments that follow*, as instruction; the HOW of education (Difference Between.com, 2012). Thus my assertion that it is curriculum *and* instruction rather than curriculum *vs* instruction.

Difference Between.com. (2012, June 27). Retrieved from <http://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-curriculum-and-vs-instruction/>

Tyler, R. W. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.