

Introduction

Students, teachers and curricula do not work independently of each other. In this essay the relationships between these three elements will be examined. This will be done individually for each of the pairs (teacher – curriculum, teacher – student and student – curriculum) before looking at the three way relationship as such.

The relation between the teacher and the curriculum

As a teacher the curriculum is something extremely important. Not only is it your primary job to educate others (children, youngsters or adults), it is to learn them specific things. These elements of teaching are described (explicit or implicit, written or as part of a system of beliefs) in the various representations of the curriculum (as discussed in week 2 and the first assignment of this course). Depending on the educational system a teacher operates in he/she has the ability to influence these levels. In a more centralized system teachers will have less influence than in a decentralized system.

The relation between teacher and the student

Although the primary purpose of a student-teacher relationship is primarily aimed at the transfer of knowledge, other dimensions exist in this relationship. Over time students will (hopefully) start to trust teachers (and vice versa). In order to facilitate this teachers have to actively invest in building a positive relationship. In doing so learning outcomes can be improved because a good relationship between teacher and student will make the latter feel safe. As pointed out by Maslov (1943) safety is a fundamental prerequisite for development.

The relation between the student and the curriculum

For the student the curriculum is something they have to master. This primarily related to to the content that is captured in the curriculum (rather than the curriculum itself). Depending on the dominating educational philosophy in the educational system, students might perceived this as something that is forced in. However, it is also very well possible students can be empowered through the curriculum as a result of progressivism approaches towards education in which a more holistic view of education is used (see week 5 materials).

Taking the three relationships together

After pair wise discussing the elements that make up the three way relationship between teachers, student and the curriculum the combination of these relationships will be discussed next. As with many three way relationships, the relationship between teachers, students and the curriculum can be represented as a triangle with each element on one of the corners (eg see the model by Eraut (2004) on

learning in the workplace) displayed in Figure 1. In these representations the ideal situation is in the middle.

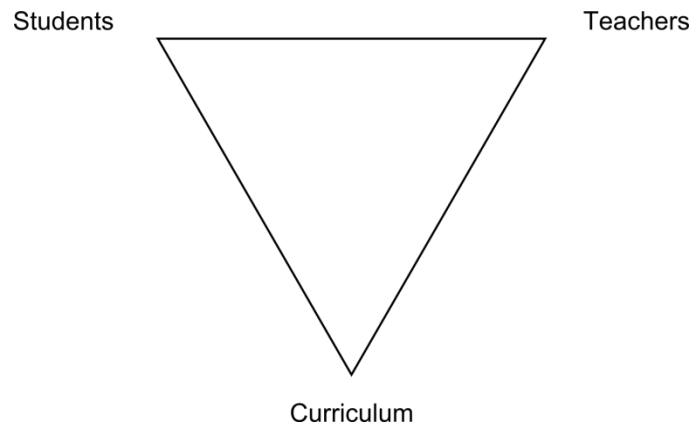


Figure 1: the three way relationship between teachers, students and the curriculum

This model can help teachers to improve their teaching practices. When focusing on different aspects of the relationship one will end up in different places in the representation. As stated above, the ideal teaching practice is exactly in the middle of the figure. If one focuses too much on one of the elements (and thus end up in one of the corners) this will inevitably result in sub-optimal teaching practices. For example, if a teaching practice focuses predominantly on the student this will have a negative outcome on the teacher (eg with them focusing too little on their own professional development) and the curriculum (eg by focusing too much on a specific strength of a student and ignoring other important areas). In order to ensure the quality of teaching all stakeholders (eg teachers, student representatives (adults in the case of primary/secondary education) and curriculum developers) have to be monitoring educational practices to balance this relationship and try to reach a balance between the elements that make up this relationship.

Bibliography

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Maslov, A. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological review*, 40(4), 370-396.