Chapter 13
The Importance of Layered Curriculum in Learning-Teaching Process

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to give information about layered curriculum in detail and cover the importance of it in the learning-teaching process. Layered curriculum is composed of three layers that entail students to work step-by-step and use higher-level thinking skills. As an educator and author, Nunley developed this approach as a result of her classroom experiences with high school students. In layered curriculum, a learner is in charge of his/her own learning. In addition, students perform their learning by using different learning styles based on their own interests and needs. Layered curriculum offers tasks that provide learners the opportunity to choose activities from simple to complex, easy to difficult, centered on Bloom's taxonomy. In this study, "General Features of Layered Curriculum Evaluation in Layered Curriculum," "Six Simple Steps for Layered Curriculum," "Implementation of Layered Curriculum in Classroom Environment," "Layered Curriculum and Bloom's Taxonomy," and "Benefits of Using the Layered Curriculum in Teaching" were covered.

INTRODUCTION

Layered Curriculum is a three layer model that requires students to work in layers and use higher level thinking skills. The approach developed by educator and author Nunley (2011) is a product of Nunley's classroom experiences with high school students. In Layered Curriculum, in which a learner is responsible for his / her own learning, students perform their learning by using different learning styles based on their own interests and needs (LaSovage, 2006). Layered Curriculum offers tasks that provide learners the opportunity to choose activities from simple to complex, easy to difficult, centered on Bloom's

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taxonomy. The curriculum consists of three layers: A, B and C. The C layer is the core competence layer and reflects what students need to do. Activities in the C layer require students to collect factual information. The B layer enables students to have the opportunity to process and apply the information they collect when completing the C layer activities. Generally, the B layer requires students to practice, process, explore, hypothesize, and solve problems. The layer A, which is the upper level, requires students to think critically about a subject. Nunley (2006) mentions that the aim of the layer A is to teach students critical thinking skills and to apply their learning in the classroom to their daily lives. The layer A consists of questions asking students to analyze a topic. Usually, there is no right or wrong answer in this layer. As in learner autonomy, learners are responsible for fulfilling the tasks expected from them in the activities they choose at each layer. In these layers, students are expected to gain basic knowledge and skills firstly and then to gain high-level thinking skills (Johnson, 2007).

In short, Layered Curriculum is based on the assumption that each learner who comes to the school environment has different and unique learning styles, intelligence areas, school readiness and thinking systems in terms of all characteristics (Nunley, 2004). Overstreet and Straquadine (2002) expressed that learners with different learning styles can have the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning and develop their learner autonomy throughout the learning process by having a voice over what they want to learn and choosing the activities themselves.

General features adopted as the basis of Layered Curriculum are summarized below (Açıkgöz Ün, 2003; Başbay, 2015; Demirel, Şahan, Ekinci, Özbay & Begimgil, 2006; Gardner, 2004; İşık Uçak, 2006; Nunley, 2016):

- Learning aimed at the school environment is learner-centered.
- Learning is a process that occurs in the mind of the individual.
- The individual is not a passive recipient of stimuli, but an assimilator of it and an active builder of behavior. He/She assimilates and structures information during learning. In other words, He/She plays an active role in learning.
- Learners take more responsibility in the learning process.
- In the learning environment, learner-learner interaction as well as learner-teacher interaction positively affects learning.
- Opportunities for learners are presented to share information, interact and produce common knowledge. The teacher is not a discipline provider or information distributor, but in a consultant role.
- The teacher makes the learner an active member of the learning environment he/she creates.
- The teacher offers options that are suitable for individual differences to learners.
- The teacher helps the learner to construct his/her learning in line with his/her individual development.
- The teacher adopts formative assessment as well as product assessment in evaluating learner success.
- The learner participates in the evaluation process and evaluates himself/herself and the members of the group.
- It is based on the idea that multiple learning environments positively affect learning.

When determining the activities to be included in the Layered Curriculum, multiple activities are offered instead of preparing a single activity for the whole class centered on the fact that students have