



## ELEMENTARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM CONCEPT

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**Abstract:** As an educator, a teacher should comprehend the basic concept of education and curriculum since they are essentials in fulfilling the duty of an educator. This study is aimed to rebuild and refresh elementary school teacher's comprehension towards the essence of education dan its basic concept. Presently, most of teachers are tends to just deliver the curriculum without concern to students' growth. This study is constructed to deliver the definition of education, definition of Elementary Education, concept of Elementary Education in elementary school, concept of children growth in education, concept of curriculum in Elementary Education, and concise explanation from experts in education. This study is a literary study which is carried under descriptive qualitative approach. This approach is chosen to qualitatively deducts the essences of education, aspects and concepts of Elementary Education, and curriculum development for education on basic level. The most important thing is to refresh the knowledge of teachers on the concept of curriculum for basic level education. Finally, this study is conducted to enhance teachers' knowledge and provide some references to them in fulfilling their duty as an educator.

**Keywords:** *elementary education, curriculum, concept*

### INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is the lifeblood of education. Curriculum itself is not something foreign to our education. Even though this word is often

mentioned, in fact not all educational practitioners understand the curriculum well. The proof is that there are still many teachers who consider what is written in textbooks to be a curriculum reference that must be fulfilled. Education practitioners' lack of understanding of the nature of the curriculum can of course have fatal consequences. Without a good understanding of the curriculum, it is impossible to achieve quality education.

At every level of education, the role of the teacher is very central because the teacher is the bridge that connects knowledge and students in the classroom. At the elementary school level, the teacher's burden is doubled because the Elementary Education level is the first level which is the foundation for students to move on to the next level. Teachers who teach as educators in elementary schools will be successful in carrying out their obligations well if their understanding of the nature of Elementary Education has reached a good level as well. This study will explore the nature of the Elementary Education curriculum to find more comprehensive concepts and knowledge related to the curriculum.

Before discussing the curriculum in detail, it would be a good idea for us to first discuss the meaning of curriculum so that we have a common concept. Judging from the origin of the word, curriculum comes from the Latin root word *currere* which means a running competition field. So what is the relationship between the track and field competition and the school curriculum? The basic concept is that a running field is a place that has a start line and a finish line. This concept was ultimately adopted by the world of education. Curriculum always has a beginning and an end goal. The ultimate goal of the curriculum is of course to create educated, qualified and efficient people.

According to Nasution (2010), the curriculum is a series of plans prepared to create a smooth teaching and learning process. This plan is implemented under the guidance and responsibility of educational institutions and teachers at each educational institution. The next definition is from Sudjana (2010). According to him, the curriculum is a collection of intentions and hopes expressed in the form of an educational program which is implemented by teachers at school. In other words, it can be

concluded that the curriculum in the world of education can be interpreted as an instrument that is arranged strategically to develop student resources.

To discuss the nature of the curriculum in Elementary Education, of course we first have to understand what Elementary Education is conceptually.

### **Elementary Education Concept**

Insight, comprehension and experience as an educator at the basic level must continue to be enriched and updated. This is because the scientific forms and concepts of Elementary Education are the brainchild of a concept that continuously develops and changes depending on the quality of resources and the needs of the general public in various fields.

A high level of comprehension of Elementary Education concepts provides a new color to the repertoire of knowledge and self-understanding for teachers. All teacher activities and behavior are a reflection of his understanding of the concept of education. For example, understanding the concept of education is "transforming ignorance into knowledge" making teachers only as lecturers. This is a serious problem in education because the concept of education has become shallow.

In general, education cannot be separated from human life because of the important role it plays. It has a huge influence on various aspects of human life and personality. Not only the present, the ever-changing role of education will also definitely influence the future. Human talents both physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually can develop to the maximum extent thanks to the influence of education that is in line with the demands of the human environment itself.

The following are various meanings of education based on expert explanations. These presentations are needed to enrich understanding of education itself and form the basis for understanding the concept of education later. It should also be noted that interpreting and providing a definition of education is very difficult because the basic concept is very complex.

Driyarkara (1980) put forward the definition that is most often used as a reference, namely that education is a way or activity to create adult humans from young humans. This activity of forming adult humans from young humans is the implementation of educational concepts and efforts. There are three main signs of Education according to the International Dictionary of Education:

1. Activities to develop abilities, attitudes and other behavior in a community environment.
2. Social development activities, in which a person is influenced by a selected and controlled environment (in this case the influence of the school) to achieve optimal social competence and individual growth.
3. Personality or human character development activities.

Based on the definition above, several general characteristics or elements in education are:

1. Goals must exist in education, which is basically the development of talents that are beneficial both individually and broadly for life.
2. This goal is achieved with systematic efforts including guidance, teaching and training efforts; These efforts are then realized in the family, school and community or in formal, informal and non-formal types of education.

Tilaar (1999:28) explains that the concept of education is an activity to build the existence of students as human beings in accordance with local, national and global levels of society and culture.

The components of the educational concept formulation are as follows.

1. Education is a continuous activity. Where students will be equipped with permanent (continuously existing) abilities in accordance with their nature as social creatures through this educational activity. Students will also learn the essence of continuous and never-ending learning.
2. Existence as a human being is also built into educational activities. This shows the activeness of students in their capacity as human beings who must interact with each other, the nature

in which they live, ideas from within and from outside themselves, and with their God.

3. Human existence appropriate to the level of society is also built into educational activities. This activity includes deepening values, as well as updating and improving morals.
4. The dimensions of space and time are important aspects in social and cultural activities. These social and cultural activities are sustainable from the past, present and future. These social and cultural activities also cover local, national, regional and global dimensions because they are supported by advances in science and communication technology.

Students with various talents given by their creators are the basis for a holistic (comprehensive) and integrative view of the concept of education. By assimilating themselves into community life and implementing life rules and human values in society, students' talents and potential can develop. This is what it means to be a cultured human being. So, education and culture are a unity that cannot and should not be separated. These two processes and activities are mutually sustainable and complementary. Separating the two is the same as limiting education from implementing moral values in human life.

Educating means directing the development of students as individuals in a unified socio-cultural system. This ability to direct students is essential for every educator. Moral choices and technical choices will determine how educators direct students in order to achieve certain goals. Educators must choose the "best" things for students' lives now and in the future. In the end, aspects of life in the present as well as the goals of human life and development in the future are the most important focus and goal of education for students as individuals, citizens, citizens and citizens of the world and as creatures of God Almighty.

Students with all the potential, abilities, traits and habits they currently have are human beings as they are. As for changes in behavior in the aspects of creativity, taste, initiative and work that are based on and

filled with human values as the main priority that is expected to occur in children, this is the condition they are in as humans as they should be.

The developmental process emerges in the educational process. Education is the process of optimizing student development; in accordance with the talents and values that exist in society. Education is an effort to create conditions conducive to children's development which makes it easier for children to develop themselves optimally. In this case, the educational process contains active activities of children in developing themselves and teachers are active in facilitating development so that it reaches the optimal stage.

The provision of education, especially formal education in schools, has been given a strong and binding legal basis. The legal basis for this is Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. In Article 1 stated that education is "... a conscious effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and the skills needed by themselves, the nation's community and the State."

Elementary school is a subsystem of Elementary Education so it will always be related to the study of Elementary Education. As we know, Elementary Education is an integrated part of the national education system. Elementary schools (SD), based on Rasyidi's (1993) opinion, are social institutions that have specific tasks as providers of Elementary Education systematically.

So it can be concluded that education in elementary schools is an educational process or activity to form basic intellectual abilities and optimally develop students' basic abilities in intellectual, social and personal aspects.

Elementary education is technically defined as the process and activities of guiding, teaching and training students aged 6 - 13 years so that they have basic abilities in intellectual, social and personal aspects that are covered and in accordance with their developmental characteristics.

## **Educational Goals in Elementary School**

The aim of education is the latest description and achievement values of the educational process. There are two functions of educational objectives, (1) providing an overview of the final state to be achieved and (2) providing direction and procedures for the efforts or processes being carried out.

Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System states that the aim of national education is to develop individuals who (1) have faith in and are devoted to God Almighty, (2) have noble character, (3) have knowledge and skills, (4) have physical and spiritual health, (5) have a stable and independent personality, and (6) have a sense of social and national responsibility. This goal has imperative implications or requires all levels of the educational unit to achieve educational goals.

The goals of national education are broadly aimed at improving children's lives as individuals, community members, Indonesian citizens and as human beings. As individuals, efforts to improve students' lives are (a) strengthening the basis of faith and piety; (b) increasing good attitudes and behavior in life; (c) teach basic knowledge and skills; (d) maintenance of physical and spiritual health; (e) increasing ability to learn; (f) formation of a strong and independent personality.

As members of society, students' development efforts are (a) strengthening their sense of social life; (b) train a sense of social responsibility; (c) teach basic knowledge and skills to participate in social life. As citizens, efforts to develop students are (a) to know their rights and obligations as citizens of the Republic of Indonesia; (b) train a sense of responsibility for the progress of the nation and state; (c) teach basic knowledge and skills in participating in the life of society, nation and state.

As human beings, efforts to develop students are (a) increasing their self-esteem as an independent and sovereign nation; (b) increase awareness of human rights; (c) teaches the importance of world order; and (d) increasing awareness about friendship between nations.

The goals of education in elementary school must refer to national education goals and Elementary Education goals and without neglecting the stages and characteristics of student development, their suitability to the

environment and regional development needs, the direction of national development, and the development of science and technology and the improvement of human life globally.

The aims of education in elementary school include the basic development of students' personalities as complete Indonesian human beings according to their level of development; fostering basic understanding and miscellany of science and technology as a basis for learning at a higher level of education and living in society.

#### Functions of Education in Elementary School

The functions of education are: (1) individuation function, (2) socialization function, (3) nationalization function, and (4) humanization function. First, the individuation function which refers to the process of becoming oneself as a unique individual and not the same as other individuals. This also fosters independence where an individual tries to get the best performance by using all the potential he has and without depending on the help of others. This makes individuation the most essential goal and function of education.

Second is the function of socialization and acculturation. This function cultivates children as social creatures. This function also develops students as good members of society. This function is closely related to the civilizing function. With this function, education must be carried out by encouraging and conditioning children with social learning, where children are taught to interact and communicate to understand, appreciate and implement the value system and norms of society.

Children will have acceptable social behavior such as honesty, caring, politeness, tolerance, etc. in accordance with their social environment. In this case, education must foster noble cultural values. Children are required to know and love the culture of their own community, and not let them know and love foreign cultures more. With this function, he will have a unique socio-cultural identity and be different from other children who live in other socio-cultural environments.

Third is the nationalization function. This function requires education to develop children into good citizens. Education must foster students' awareness, love and pride as citizens of the Unitary State of the Republic of

Indonesia (NKRI). Education must introduce various aspects of the country's wealth so that children have a sense of love and pride in their own country.

Fourth is the humanization function. This function means that education must cultivate children to become human beings and citizens of the world, regardless of differences in ethnicity, race and religion. With this, children are fostered in developing behavior of mutual respect or tolerance for differences, living in harmony and peace in diversity without losing their own identity.

In another explanation, Umar Tirtarahardja and La Sula (2000) put forward the function of education as follows.

Education serves multiple crucial functions in society. Firstly, it plays a pivotal role in cultural transformation by acting as a tool for transmitting cultural values, customs, and habits from one generation to another. This ensures the preservation of positive aspects deemed beneficial for children and future generations, while also influencing the evolution of societal values. Secondly, education is instrumental in personal formation, representing a systematic effort to shape and enhance an individual's personality. This involves cultivating characteristics such as creativity, independence, responsibility, tenacity, and perseverance. Thirdly, education contributes to the preparation of citizens by striving to mold students into responsible members of society. Aligned with the goals and philosophy of the nation, it aims to instill an understanding of rights and obligations in accordance with the laws and regulations of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Lastly, education is geared towards workforce preparation, equipping children with a diverse set of abilities, attitudes, and skills to make them productive individuals capable of contributing to the well-being of themselves, their families, communities, and the nation at large.

Elementary Education functions as the initial level of education in schools to develop the basic human personality as citizens and citizens who are virtuous, have faith and are devoted to God Almighty, and have basic abilities and skills as provisions for further education and provisions for life in society. Based on the function of education in general and the

function of Elementary Education in particular, it can be concluded that the function of education in elementary school is:

First, the function of forming and developing the child's basic personality. This means that the formation of the basics of a child's personality as a complete individual is the most important thing in elementary school education. Children are not miniature adults, nor are they empty containers that can be freely filled with anything. As individuals, each elementary school child, according to their age and level of maturity, requires different needs to grow and develop.

Second, the function of education in elementary schools is a forum for cultivating good citizens and citizens of the Republic of Indonesia. To make children into good members of society and citizens, education in elementary school must foster basic knowledge, attitudes and skills. Knowledge and awareness of the rights and obligations as good citizens and citizens are important for children to have. Children must also have basic knowledge and skills and have noble character, have faith and be devoted to God Almighty.

Third, cultural transformation, namely the way education maintains and/or changes certain values or develops new values that are deemed more appropriate to the development of society.

As educators in elementary schools, teachers must create a learning atmosphere and learning process that is conducive and supportive so that the implementation of these functions in education is truly integrated, dynamic and effective. So, Kartadinata (1996) emphasized that optimal student development must be the goal of learning in elementary school (not just providing learning material). It must be remembered that within the child there is a mind as a vital instrument for developing himself. Optimal development also includes the development of self-concept, emotions, independence and responsibility. In the aspect of self-concept, in general elementary school students tend to see everything from their own point of view (egocentric), not yet reaching an objective view, but slowly there will be changes according to their level of maturity, namely awareness of their relationship with the environment or people who are different from themselves.

The tendency for emotional aspects to be unstable; physically aggressive, and tend to make repeated mistakes without realizing it will slowly become more cooperative, willing to give in, and quickly realize mistakes. Simply put, the interests of other people will be more aware of the child. Another thing that stands out is that they are often hesitant in taking initiative and making decisions without looking at the risks. Children will also realize an attitude of responsibility through their willingness to determine their own activities, behaving creatively, being willing to work together, not being afraid to take risks and being independent.

In the social aspect, children like to gather, respond quickly to information, begin to be aware of gender identity (sex), followed by a desire to show their identity. There will also be prominent competitive, intolerant and individualistic desires. Children's ethics tend to still be externally oriented in terms of their development. The reason is that obeying morality, ethics and norms is only to avoid punishment or obtain rewards.

### ***Principles of Education in Elementary School***

Discussions about rules, laws, rules, and how one should behave are included in the principles of elementary school education. Most of the following educational principles will be presented based on a developmental perspective. Students or students as the main point in education are the reason why the developmental perspective is used. The role of students as the central point of education is still a relatively new educational perspective and is still being refined in our country. This is due to various factors.

Historically, there have been many opinions and views of educational experts who have used a developmental perspective to develop educational principles. According to Abin Syamsuddin Makmun (1996), because every education and learning process in particular continues to deal with humans or individuals in development, the principles and laws of human and/or individual development should be the starting point for education.

Next, Kartadinata (1996) explained the principles of elementary school students and their comparison with the principles of elementary

school education. From the aspect of social-emotional and behavioral development, the related practical principles are as follows.

Teachers must delve deeper into understanding the development of positive relationships within groups, as it paves the way for increased opportunities and support for collaboration among students. The significance of this lies in its direct correlation with mental development and the reinforcement of interpersonal bonds. Moreover, fostering societal and cultural benchmarks as essential skills for children's learning success should be a priority, ensuring their competency in navigating diverse environments. Additionally, it is crucial to acknowledge that children heavily rely on the roles of teachers and parents in cultivating self-confidence and self-control. These foundational elements contribute significantly to a child's holistic growth and development.

From the aspect of individual diversity, a practical principle that is closely related to the developmental approach is that children and their diverse backgrounds give rise to diverse teaching methods and teaching materials.

### **Basic Principles of Elementary School Curriculum Development**

Based on Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, art.

In article 36 paragraph (3) The curriculum is prepared in accordance with the level of education within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia by taking into account: a. increased faith and piety; b. increasing noble morals; c. increasing the potential, intelligence and interest of students; d. Diversity of regional and environmental potential; e. regional and national development demands; f. demands of the world of work; g. developments in science, technology and art; h. religion; i. dynamics of global development; and j. national unity and national values.

To develop a curriculum in elementary schools, there are at least five principles that must be adhered to. The first principle is relevance. The principle of relevance means that the curriculum must be developed to suit the demands of the times and society without ignoring the level of

development of students. The second principle is effectiveness. Effectiveness can be interpreted as how the curriculum developed can be implemented and the achievement of its objectives can be clearly measured. The next principle is the principle of efficiency. This principle refers to how the curriculum must be developed by considering all factors, whether supporting factors or inhibiting factors, in its implementation in the field. The next principle is the principle of flexibility. This principle means that the curriculum developed is not rigid. This means if necessary, adjustments in curriculum implementation are not impossible to do. The final principle that must be considered in curriculum development is the principle of continuity. This principle means that the curriculum must be developed in such a way that each grade level has a continuous relationship in order to achieve targeted learning goals.

#### Curriculum Function

The curriculum has different functions depending on the interests of the parties concerned. For teachers, the curriculum is an absolute thing that must be understood because understanding this curriculum then becomes the basis for teachers to create learning plans and compile teaching materials. For school principals, the curriculum is a set of strategic plans whose implementation must be monitored. Therefore, the function of the curriculum for school principals is as a guide that must be followed by all school staff under their leadership. For society, the curriculum is a forum so that society's expectations regarding student learning output at school can be accommodated. In other words, the curriculum is a guide that must be followed so that student learning outcomes are applicable to society.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The essence of the curriculum is often forgotten by some people involved in the world of education. There are many misconceptions about the concept and implementation of the curriculum, therefore a basic understanding of the curriculum is needed.

With so many definitions and concepts of educational curriculum, it is necessary to consider one of them as a reference, namely the Elementary Education Curriculum Concept which refers to the development of students. In simple terms, education aims to describe the final results or values to be achieved from the educational process itself. In general, there are two functions of educational goals, namely (a) providing an overview of the final goal to be achieved, and (b) outlining the ways and direction for all efforts and efforts made in the process towards that final goal.

In the end, the basic formation of the child's personality as a complete Indonesian human being in line with his or her level of development is the goal of elementary school education. Education in elementary school has four main functions, namely first, the basic function of forming and developing the basic personality of children. Second, the function is to prepare good citizens and citizens of the Republic of Indonesia. Third, the function of cultural transformation is to introduce Indonesian culture. Fourth is the function of cultivating basic abilities and skills to continue education at a higher level.

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