

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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"Every Journey Begins With The First Step."

Curriculum is the complete set of taught material. It is prescriptive as opposed to the 'descriptive' syllabus, which is the outline of topics covered. If the curriculum prescribes the objectives of the system, the [syllabus](#) describes the means to achieve them. A syllabus gives a more focused outline for particular subjects. It can't be equated, because a curriculum is for a course but a syllabus is for a subject."

The curriculum development process systematically organizes what will be taught, who will be taught, and how it will be taught. Each component affects and interacts with other components. For example, what will be taught is affected by who is being taught (e.g., their stage of development in age, maturity, and education). Methods of how content is taught are affected by who is being taught, their characteristics, and the setting.

Essential Considerations for Curriculum Development:

1. Issue/problem/need is identified (issue).....>what?
2. Characteristics and needs of learners (target audience).....>who?
3. Changes intended for learners (intended outcomes/objectives).....> what the learners will be able to do?
4. The important and relevant content.....>what?
5. Methods to accomplish intended outcomes>how?
6. Evaluation strategies for methods, content, and intended outcomes> what works?.

Curriculum Development Model

Figure 1 shows how the different components of curriculum development relate to each other and to the curriculum development process. It begins when an issue, concern, or problem needs to be addressed. If education or training a segment of the population will help solve the problem, then curriculum to support an educational effort becomes a priority with human and financial resources allocated.

The next step is to form a curriculum development team. The team makes systematic decisions about the target audience (learner characteristics), intended out-comes (objectives), content, methods, and evaluation strategies. With input from the curriculum development team, draft curriculum products are developed, tested, evaluated, and redesigned - if necessary. When the final product is produced, volunteer training is conducted. The model shows a circular process where volunteer training provides feedback for new materials or revisions to the existing curriculum.

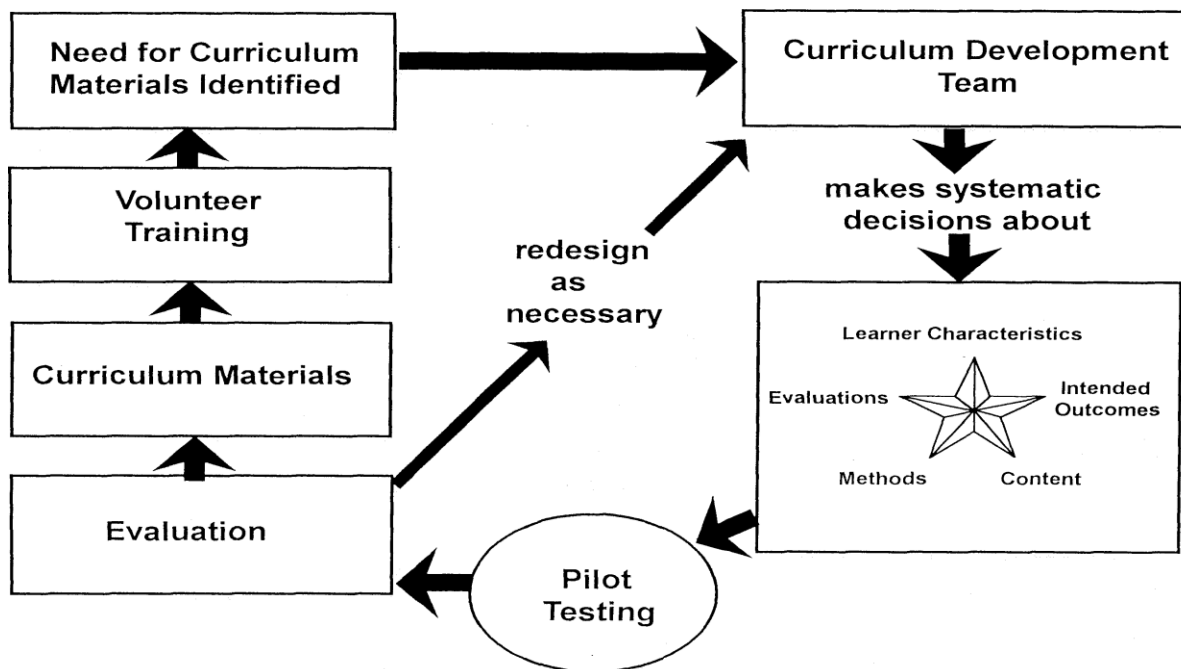


Figure 1. Components of curriculum development

Phases and Steps in Curriculum Development

There are 4 distinct phases and 12 steps in curriculum development. Figure 2 illustrates how the 12 essential steps progress from one to the next. It also shows the interaction and relationships of the four essential phases of the curriculum development process: **(I) Planning, (II) Content and Methods, (III) Implementation, and (IV) Evaluation and Reporting.** It is important to acknowledge that things do not always work exactly as depicted in a model!

Each phase has several steps or tasks to complete in logical sequence. These steps are not always separate and distinct, but may overlap and occur concurrently. For example, the curriculum development team is involved in all of the steps. Evaluations should occur in most of the steps to assess progress. The team learns what works and what does not and determines the impact of the curriculum on learners after it is implemented. Each step logically follows the previous. It would make no sense to design learning activities before learner outcomes and content are described and identified. Similarly, content cannot be determined before learner outcomes are described.

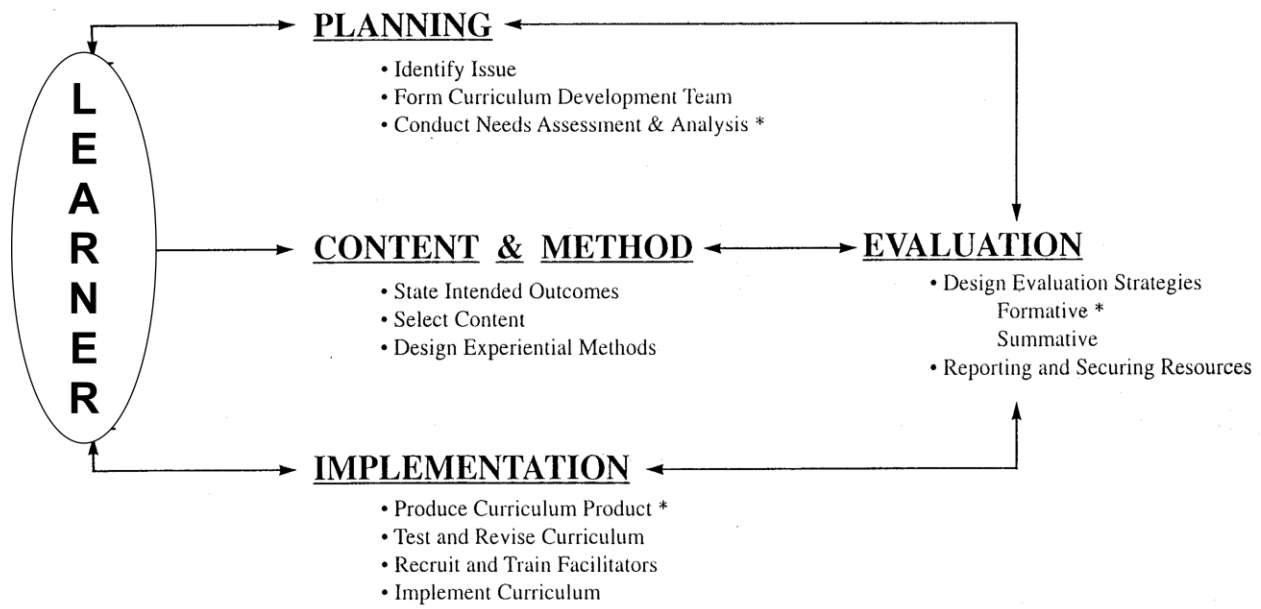


Figure 2: Phases and Steps of curriculum development

Two types of evaluation are included in the Phases and Steps: **(1) Formative phase** provides feedback during the process of developing the curriculum, and **(2) Summative phase** answers questions about changes (impact) that have occurred in learners because of their learning experiences. Summative evaluation provides evidence for what works, what does not work, and what needs to be improved. A brief description of each of the curriculum development steps is described below.

Phase I: Planning

"Nobody plans to fail but failure results from a failure to plan."

The planning phase lays the foundation for all of the curriculum development steps. The steps in this phase include:

(1) Identifying Issue/Problem/Need

The need for curriculum development usually emerges from a concern about a major **issue** or problem of one or more target audience. This section explores some of the questions that need to be addressed to define the issue and to develop a statement

that will guide the selection of the members of a curriculum development team. The following questions are relevant:

- Which problem has led to thinking of new curriculum?
- What are the needs of the country, profession and individual students and how can the proposed curriculum meet these needs?
- Who are the intended target group?
- Are there similar courses with similar aims?
- What are their strengths and deficiencies?
- What facilities can be used?
- Who are the teachers and what are their experience and skills?
- What are the physical, administrative and financial requirements?

(2) Forming Curriculum Development Team

Once the nature and scope of the issue has been broadly defined, the members of the curriculum development team can be selected. Topics covered in this section include: (1) the **roles and functions** of team members, (2) a process for **selecting members** of the curriculum development team, and (3) principles of **collaboration and teamwork**. The goal is to obtain expertise for the areas included in the scope of the curriculum content among the team members and develop an effective team.

(3) Conducting Needs Assessment and Analysis

There are two phases in the needs assessment process. The first is procedures for **conducting a needs assessment**. A number of techniques are aimed toward learning **what** is needed and by **whom** relative to the identified issue. Techniques covered in this section include: KAP - Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice Survey; focus groups; and environmental scanning.

Analysis, the second part of this needs assessment step, describes techniques on **how to use the data and the results** of the information gathered. Included are: ways to identify gaps between knowledge and practice; trends emerging from the data; a process to prioritize needs; and identification of the characteristics of the target audience.

Phase II: Content and Methods

Phase II determines intended outcomes (what learners will be able to do after participation in curriculum activities), the content (what will be taught), and the methods (how it will be taught). Steps include:

(4) Stating Intended Outcomes

Once the issue is defined, the curriculum team is formed, the needs assessed, analyzed and prioritized, the next step is to refine and restate the issue, if needed, and develop the **intended outcomes or educational objectives**. An intended outcome states what the learner will be able to do as a result of participating in the curriculum activities.

(5) Selecting Content

The next challenge in the curriculum development process is **selecting content** that will make a real difference in the lives of the learner and ultimately society as a whole. At this point, the primary questions are: "If the intended outcome is to be attained, **what** will the learner need to know? What knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours will need to be acquired and practiced?"

(6) Designing Experiential Methods

After the content is selected, the next step is to design activities (learning experiences) to help the learner achieve appropriate intended outcomes. An experiential learning

model and its components (i.e., experience, share, process, generalize, and apply) include the following:

1. learning styles and activities appropriate for each style;
2. a list of types of activities (with descriptions);
3. an activity design worksheet for facilitators; and
4. brief discussions on learning environments and delivery modes.

Phase III: Implementation

(7) Producing Curriculum Product

Once the content and experiential methods have been agreed upon, the actual production of curriculum materials begins. This section includes: 1) suggestions for finding and evaluating existing materials; 2) evaluation criteria; and 3) suggestions for producing curriculum materials.

(8) Testing and Revising Curriculum

This step includes suggestions to select test sites and conduct a formative evaluation of curriculum materials during the production phase.

(9) Recruiting and Training Facilitators

It is a waste of resources to develop curriculum materials if adequate training is not provided for facilitators to implement it.

(10) Implementing Curriculum

Effective implementation of newly developed curriculum products is unlikely to occur without planning.

Phase IV: Evaluation and Reporting

(11) Designing Evaluation Strategies

Evaluation is a phase in the curriculum development model as well as a specific step. Two types of evaluation, formative and summative, are used during curriculum development. Formative evaluations are used during the needs assessment, product development, and testing steps. Summative evaluations are undertaken to measure and report on the outcomes of the curriculum. This step reviews evaluation strategies and suggests simple procedures to produce valid and reliable information. A series of questions are posed to guide the summative evaluation process.

(12) Reporting and Securing Resources

The final element in an evaluation strategy is "delivering the pay off (i.e., getting the results into the hands of people who can use them). In this step, suggestions for what and how to report to key shareholders, especially funding and policy decision makers, are provided and a brief discussion on how to secure resources for additional programming.