

PART

I

Introduction to Curriculum Development in Nursing Education: The Evidence-Informed, Context-Relevant, Unified Curriculum



Creation of an Evidence-Informed, Context-Relevant, Unified Curriculum

CHAPTER PREVIEW

Curriculum development in nursing education is a scholarly and creative process intended to produce an evidence-informed, context-relevant, unified curriculum. It is an ongoing activity in nursing education, even in schools with established curricula. In this text, the term *schools* is used to encompass Schools, Faculties, and Colleges of Nursing.

The extent of curriculum development ranges from regular refinement of class activities to the creation of a completely original and reconceptualized curriculum. In this text, curriculum development activities are presented individually for ease of description and comprehension. However, emphasis is on the idea that the curriculum development process does not occur in ordered, sequential stages or phases. The process is iterative, with some work occurring concurrently, and with each new decision having the potential to affect previous ones.

This chapter begins with definitions and conceptualizations of *curriculum* and an *evidence-informed, context-relevant, unified curriculum*. These are followed by a description of curriculum development in nursing education. Next, the Model of Evidence-Informed, Context-Relevant, Unified Curriculum Development is presented. The model comprises a summary of the major aspects of the curriculum development process, serving as an advance organizer for this text. Additionally, attention is given to some of the interpersonal issues that can influence the curriculum development team, and hence, the completed work. The ideas about the curriculum development process introduced in this chapter are discussed more comprehensively in succeeding chapters.

The term *curriculum work* is used in this chapter and throughout the text as a shorthand method of referring to all or some of the activities of curriculum

development, implementation, and evaluation. The context will make evident the activities to which the term refers.

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED IN THIS CHAPTER

- How is *curriculum* conceptualized?
- What is an evidence-informed, context-relevant, unified curriculum?
- How can the scholarly nature of curriculum development be enhanced?
- What is the Model of Evidence-Informed, Context-Relevant, Unified Curriculum Development in Nursing Education?
- What is the role of interpersonal dynamics in curriculum development?

Definitions and Conceptualizations of Curriculum

Curriculum is defined as “a course; specifically, a regular course of study or training, as at a school or university” (OED Online, 2016). The word comes from the Latin *currere*, to run, or to run a course (Wiles & Bondi, 2011), and originally meant the knowledge passed from one generation to the next (Wiles, 2005). A common understanding of curriculum is a program of studies with specified courses leading to an academic certificate, diploma, or degree.

Another perspective of curriculum is “a desired goal or set of values that can be activated through a development process, culminating in experiences for learners” (Wiles & Bondi, 2011, p. 5). These authors further state that the extent to which the experiences represent the envisioned goals is dependent on the effectiveness of the curriculum developers.

A more specific and expansive view is:

The curriculum is a set of plans made for guiding learning . . . usually represented in retrievable documents of several levels of generality, and the actualization of those plans in the classroom, as experienced by the learners and as recorded by an observer; those experiences take place in a learning environment that also influences what is learned. (Glatthorn, Boschee, Whitehead, & Boschee, 2016, p. 4)

This definition emphasizes accessible written plans, witnessed and documented classroom experiences, and the milieu in which the experiences occur.

Parkay, Anctil, and Hass (2014) give attention to the ideas of theoretical and research bases for curricula and a societal context in their definition:

The curriculum is all of the educational experiences learners have in an educational program, the purpose of which is to achieve broad goals and

related specific objectives that have been developed within a framework of theory and research, past and present professional practice, and the changing needs of society. (p. 3)

They explain that:

- The curriculum is preplanned and based on information from many sources.
- Objectives and instructional planning should be based on theory and research about society, human development, and learning.
- Curriculum decisions should be based on criteria.
- Students play an important role in the experienced curriculum.

Many other conceptualizations exist: a written document, planned experiences, a reflection of social emphases, planned learning outcomes, hidden or visible, and living or dead (Hensen, 2010). Hensen summarizes these definitions and interpretations into three categories: means versus ends, content versus experiences, and process versus plan. Oliva (2009) also reduces the many views of curriculum to three categories. These focus on purpose, what the curriculum does or is meant to achieve; the context in which the curriculum is implemented, possibly revealing the underlying philosophy, such as a learner-centered curriculum; and strategy or particular instructional or learning processes. Somewhat similarly, Wiles (2005) categorizes definitions according to the emphasis on curriculum as subject matter, a plan, an experience, or outcomes. Combining some of the foregoing ideas, and drawing on ideas of complexity thinking, Hussain, Conner, and Mayo (2014) view curriculum as “six partial and coupled facets that exist simultaneously: curriculum as structure, curriculum as process, curriculum as content, curriculum as teaching, curriculum as learning and curriculum as activity” (p. 59).

Following an analysis of curricula, and the meanings of *curriculum* and *educational program* in North America and Europe, Jonnaert, Ettayebi, and Defise (as cited in Jonnaert & Therriault, 2013) created the following definition:

A curriculum is a system made up of a series of educational components. Articulated among themselves, these components permit the orientation and operationalization of an education system through pedagogical and administrative action plans. It is anchored in the historical, social, linguistic, political, religious, geographical and cultural characteristics of a country, region or locality. (p. 405)

This characterization points to the relationships among curricular components, including administrative features. It also gives importance to the context in which the curriculum is operationalized. Further, Jonnaert and Therriault (2013) believe that a curriculum can exist in six forms: a subject of study, a process

of curriculum development, a product of the development process, a reference framework for reform, a subject of adaptation, and a means of regulating an education system.

Lunenberg (2011) offers a category that is markedly different from those previously described: *the nontechnical approach*. This refers to ideas about curriculum and teaching that are more aesthetic, emotional, political, and visionary, and less concerned with the methods and procedures of curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation. For example, *narrative pedagogy* is a phenomenological, interpretative approach in which storytelling is the basis for interpretation and learning. Storytelling and co-interpretation of experiences, not content, is at the heart of classroom activity (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009; Ironside, 2015). In a somewhat similar vein, Freire (1970/2001) views education as a process of *conscientization*, the development of critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action, and curriculum as the creation of knowledge by learners and teachers together, within the context of their lives (Freire, 1998). Based on the real-life situation of students, the curriculum is problem focused, not subject based, inherently interdisciplinary, and highly relevant to students (Warner, 2012). Related to Friere's ideas of critical social pedagogy, other pedagogies have emerged as philosophies, teaching methods, and bases for curriculum, for example, feminist pedagogy (Light, Nicholas, & Bondy, 2015), and transformative learning (Cranton, 2016; Mezirow, Taylor, & Associates, 2009). The premises of the nontechnical approaches can overlap and may be combined, as exemplified in critical feminist pedagogy (Chow, Fleck, Fan, Joseph, & Lyter, 2003), often extending to include matters of race, culture, and sexuality. In descriptions of these education and learning approaches, attention is given to the underlying philosophies and to the processes of personal transformation, dialogue, reflection, inclusion, and democracy that should occur within and among students and teachers. The logistics of a formal curriculum, such as course sequencing, are not the focus of nontechnical curriculum approaches, although in professional programs, such as nursing, the nontechnical approaches can be used within the structure of a formal curriculum.

Finally, Joseph (2011) offers a perspective on curriculum unlike the preceding ideas. She conceptualizes curriculum as *culture* with “complex sociopolitical, political, and ethical layers of meaning” (p. 3), and recognizes that many cultures can exist simultaneously within an educational setting. Because curriculum is a “process for transforming educational aims and practices” (p. 3), it requires inquiry and introspection.

The definition of curriculum is important, because definitions “convey educators' perceptions, and in turn, these perceptions affect how a curriculum is used and indeed, even whether it is used at all” (Hensen, 2010, p. 9). Additionally, the

definition specifies the scope of work to be completed by curriculum developers (Wiles & Bondi, 2011).

Despite differing definitions and conceptions, a curriculum is implemented with the intention that learning will occur and student potential will be unlocked. In professional programs, there is a written plan that usually contains philosophical statements and goals or outcomes; indicates some selection, organization, and sequencing of subject matter and learning experiences; and integrates evaluation of learning. These elements, among others, are addressed within the Model of Evidence-Informed, Context-Relevant, Unified Curriculum Development and in subsequent chapters.

Curriculum or Program?

Although the term *nursing curriculum* is often used interchangeably with *nursing program*, the latter is broader in scope. The nursing program is comprised of the nursing curriculum; the school of nursing culture; administrative operations of the school; faculty members' complete teaching, research, and professional activities; the school's relationships with other academic units, healthcare and community agencies, and professional and accrediting organizations; institution-wide support services for students and faculty; and support for the school of nursing within and beyond the parent institution. In brief, the nursing program includes activities and relationships that influence the quality and nature of the student experience but extend beyond the student experience itself.

Nursing Curriculum as Evidence-Informed, Context-Relevant, and Unified

In this text, *nursing curriculum* is defined as the *totality of the philosophical approaches, curriculum goals or outcomes, overall design, courses, strategies to ignite learning, delivery methods, interactions, learning climate, evaluation methods, curriculum policies, and resources*. The curriculum includes all matters that affect nursing students' learning and progression and that are within the authority of the school of nursing. This conceptualization aligns with ideas of curriculum as a plan, experiences, processes, means, strategy, culture, and as being visible.

Evidence-Informed

A curriculum that is evidence-informed is based on systematically and purposefully gathered evidence about:

- Students, learning, teaching, evaluation, and nursing education practices and trends

- Clients and their responses to health situations
- Nursing practice
- The context in which the curriculum will be offered and graduates will practice nursing

The evidence that is gathered is then subject to interpretation by curriculum developers. Plans are created, appraised in accordance with the realities of the school of nursing, and then finalized by the consensual judgment of nurse educators. As such, the curriculum is informed by evidence, but not based solely on evidence. Therefore, the term *evidence-informed* and not *evidence-based* is used.

An evidence-informed curriculum is dynamic, evolving as new evidence becomes available. Ongoing modification in response to new evidence ensures that the curriculum remains current.

Context-Relevant

A curriculum that is context-relevant is:

- Responsive to students; current and projected societal, health, and community situations; and current and projected imperatives of the nursing profession
- Consistent with the mission, philosophy, and goals of the educational institution and school of nursing
- Feasible within the realities of the school and community

This type of curriculum is defined by, and grounded in, the forces and circumstances that affect society, health care, education, recipients of nursing care, the nursing profession, and the educational institution. Although there will be significant similarities in the nursing curricula of many schools, those that are most strongly contextually relevant will have unique features reflective of local and/or regional circumstances. However, a context-relevant curriculum is not simply reactive to current circumstances; it also reflects attention to projections about the future. As such, a context-relevant curriculum is forward looking and prepares graduates for current nursing practice and the type of nursing practice that could or should exist now and in the future.

Unified

A curriculum that is unified contains curricular components that are conceptually, logically, cohesively, and visibly related, specifically:

- Philosophical approaches, professional abilities, and curriculum concepts are evident in the curriculum goals or outcomes.
- Level and course learning goals or outcomes/competencies are derived from the curriculum goals or outcomes.

- Course titles reflect the philosophical approaches and curriculum concepts.
- Strategies to ignite learning and opportunities for students to demonstrate learning are consistent with the curriculum goals or outcomes, and philosophical and educational approaches.
- The language of the philosophical approaches and curriculum concepts are used in written materials and teaching-learning interactions.

The cohesion and connections between and among all aspects of the curriculum are evident. This unity is apparent in written curriculum documents and the curriculum that is enacted daily.

In summary, a curriculum that is evidence-informed, context-relevant, and unified is grounded in evidence about nursing education, nursing practice, students, and society, and is appropriate to the situation in which it is offered. The curriculum is forward looking and organized in a coherent fashion with clear relationships among the curricular elements so that its unified nature is visible.

Curriculum Development in Nursing Education

Curriculum development in nursing education is a scholarly and creative process intended to produce an evidence-informed, context-relevant, unified nursing curriculum. The ultimate purpose is to create learning opportunities that will build students' professional knowledge, skills, values, identity, and confidence so that graduates will practice nursing professionally, that is, safely and competently in changing social and healthcare environments, thereby contributing to the health and quality of life of those they serve.

Curriculum development is scholarly work. It is an intellectual endeavor encompassing purposeful data gathering, logical thinking, careful analysis, presentation of cogent arguments, and precise writing. The curriculum development process is also creative, requiring imaginative and flexible thinking, openness to new ideas, tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty, and risk taking. Overall, curriculum work is characterized by interaction, cooperation, change, and possibly conflict; comprised of overlapping, interactive, and iterative decision making; shaped by contextual realities and political timeliness; and influenced by the personal interests, styles, philosophies, judgments, and values of the curriculum developers.

The complex processes that lead to a substantial revision of an existing curriculum or creation of a new curriculum provide an opportunity for faculty members to expand their scholarly work, develop and implement fresh perspectives on the education of nursing students, and influence the culture of the school of nursing. Additionally, curriculum development provides an avenue

to strengthen the school's impact on the community and to gain support from members of the educational institution, community, and nursing profession.

The curriculum development process has no absolute end. Once developed, the nursing curriculum undergoes refinements and modifications as it is implemented, researched, and evaluated, and as new evidence becomes available about teaching, learning, students, society, health, health care, nursing education, and nursing practice. A nursing curriculum cannot remain static, inert, and unaltered because the evidence that informs the curriculum and the circumstances in which it is offered are constantly changing. The alterations (some minor, some extensive) made during the life of the curriculum reflect faculty members' ongoing efforts to offer a strong curriculum that is relevant to its context and to the students experiencing it.

Model of Evidence-Informed, Context-Relevant, Unified Curriculum Development in Nursing Education

Although written and schematic representations of curriculum development are generally linear and sequential, this is not how nursing curricula are actually developed. Curriculum development is an integrated and recursive process, with each decision influencing concurrent and subsequent choices, and possibly leading to a rethinking of previous ideas. A cohesive nursing curriculum results from ongoing communication among groups working simultaneously and/or serially on different aspects of curriculum development, review and critique of completed work, and confirmation of decisions.

The iterative and recursive nature of curriculum work cannot be illustrated accurately in a two-dimensional representation because depicting the multiple and repetitive interactions that occur between and among the individual elements of curriculum development would result in a crowded and confusing model. Therefore, we present a model of the curriculum development process in nursing education that appears linear, sequential, and fixed. However, chapter descriptions of each element of the model and the feedback loops make evident that the process is interactive and that no element is completed without reference to other elements.

The Model of Evidence-Informed, Context-Relevant, Unified Curriculum Development in Nursing Education describes the overall process for nursing curriculum development and is illustrated in **Figure 1-1**. The model is multidimensional, with three core processes of curriculum work: faculty development, ongoing appraisal, and scholarship. Also included in the model are the specific elements of curriculum development, and feedback loops that denote the dynamic nature of curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation.

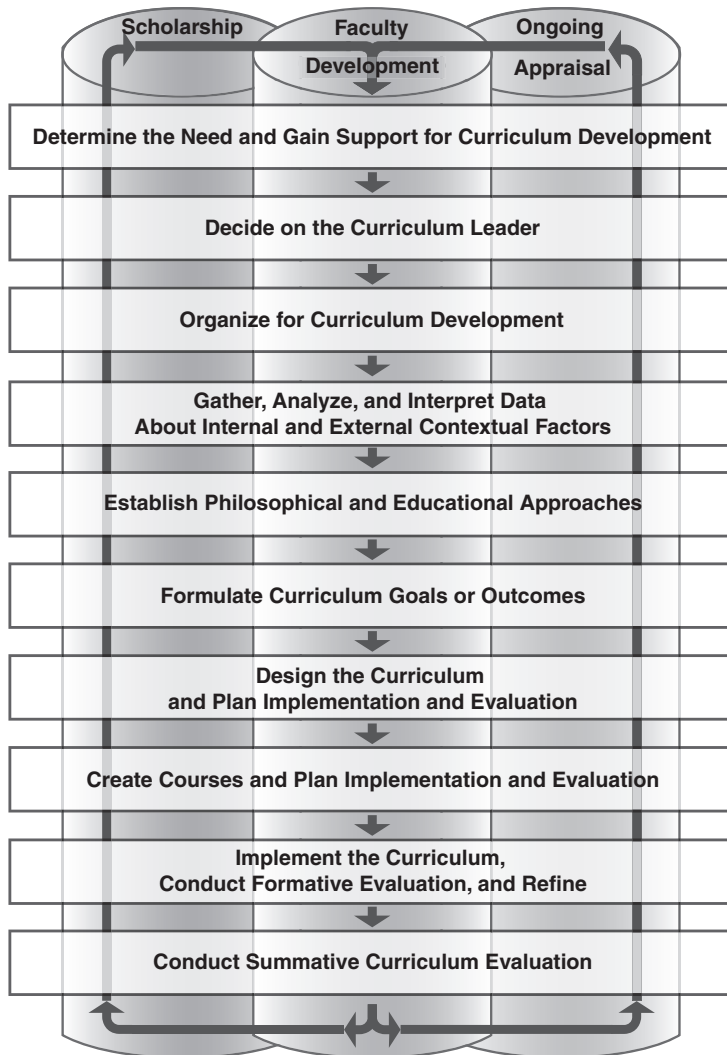


Figure 1-1. Model of Evidence-Informed, Context-Relevant, Unified Curriculum Development.

© C. L. Iwasiw and D. Goldenberg. Modified from Iwasiw, C., Goldenberg, D., & Andrusyszyn, M.A. (2009). *Curriculum development in nursing education* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Jones and Bartlett.

The model is applicable to all levels of nursing education and to all forms of curriculum delivery.

Core Processes of Curriculum Work

All aspects of faculty development are enhanced by attention to three core processes: faculty development, ongoing appraisal, and scholarship. These core processes permeate all activities leading to a sound curriculum.

Faculty Development

Faculty development is necessary for all aspects of curriculum work because many nursing faculty and other stakeholders may have little or no preparation in educational theory. An evidence-informed, context-relevant, unified curriculum can result only when the developers understand the processes of curriculum development. Therefore, deliberate and ongoing faculty development is essential to:

- Ensure that those engaged in curriculum development acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to contribute meaningfully to the processes and decisions of curriculum development
- Implement and evaluate the curriculum as intended

Individuals' openness to new ideas and methods is fundamental to curriculum work, and this openness is nurtured through faculty development activities. Members' changing perspectives are indicative of personal development, intellectual growth, and emerging commitment to the developing curriculum.

Ongoing Appraisal

Ongoing appraisal *is the deliberative, continuous, repeated, and careful critique of curriculum ideas, products, and processes during and after their creation, implementation, and evaluation.* Ongoing appraisal of all aspects of the processes and products of curriculum development is inherent to the overall endeavor. Review and critique are necessary to ensure that:

- Completed work is consistent with the basic curriculum tenets and is of an appropriate quality.
- The processes in place are effective and satisfactory to members of the curriculum development team.

Scholarship

Scholarship is a central activity of academia, and therefore, ought to be a core activity of all curriculum work. This scholarship can include formal research, expository or analytical publications, and presentations to peers and stakeholders. Topics could include the processes experienced, insights gained, and work completed. Such activities elevate curriculum work from a local initiative to knowledge development and dissemination, thereby advancing the science of nursing education.

Figure 1-2 is a model of the relationship of the three core processes to curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation. The core processes are foundational to intellectual rigor in curriculum work.

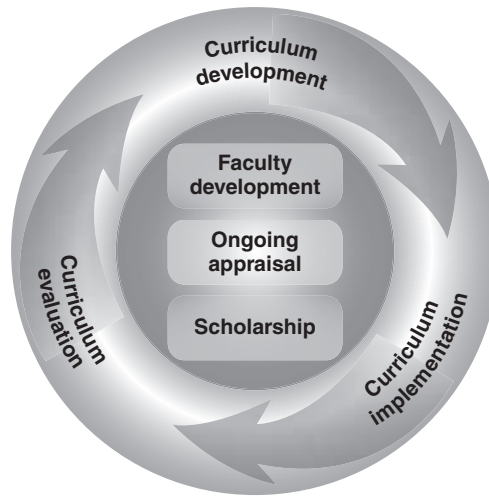


Figure 1-2. Core processes of curriculum work.

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Curriculum Development Activities

Determine the Need and Gain Support for Curriculum Development

When a decision is made to open a school of nursing or to introduce a new program within an existing school, curriculum development is necessary. More typically, however, curriculum development begins with an acknowledgment that the existing curriculum is no longer working as effectively as desired. This recognition can arise from altered circumstances within the school (e.g., changing faculty or student profile), or outside the school (e.g., changed nursing practice or accreditation standards).

When there is a desire to develop a nursing curriculum, support is needed from nursing faculty, educational administrators, and other stakeholders, such as students and nursing leaders. Gaining support for the curriculum development enterprise includes describing the logical reasons for altering the curriculum and appealing to the values held collectively by members of the school and educational institution. Faculty members' support and commitment are essential for curriculum development to proceed. Additionally, administrative support (e.g., altered work assignments, secretarial assistance, promotion and tenure considerations) provides evidence of institutional backing for the initiative. Curriculum development is contingent upon adequate resources to complete the work.

Decide on the Curriculum Leader

It is vital that a leader to guide the curriculum development process be determined. This individual can be appointed, elected, or given the position by consensus, according to the usual practices within a school of nursing. It is expected that the leader be knowledgeable about curriculum development, possess managerial skills to coordinate the logistics, and have the support of faculty and other stakeholders.

Organize for Curriculum Development

Attention to the logistical matters that will lead to a successful outcome is essential. Organizing for curriculum development requires consideration of, and decisions about leadership, the decision-making processes, committee structures and purposes, and approaches to getting the work done.

Gather, Analyze, and Interpret Data About Internal and External Contextual Factors

Systematic data gathering about the environment in which the curriculum will be implemented and in which graduates will practice nursing is critical to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to its context. Data are gathered about specific contextual factors. The contextual factors are *the forces, situations, and circumstances that exist both within and outside the educational institution and that have the potential to influence the school and its curriculum*. These are interrelated, complex, and, at times, seamless and overlapping. Internal contextual factors exist within the school and the educational institution; external contextual factors originate outside the institution.

Typically, information is obtained about internal factors of history; philosophy, mission, and goals; culture; financial resources; programs and policies; and infrastructure. Similarly, data are gathered about the external contextual factors: demographics, culture, health care, professional standards and trends, technology, environment, and socio-politico-economics. It is necessary to determine precisely which data are required about each contextual factor, as well as the most appropriate data sources. The data are then analyzed and interpreted to deduce the core curriculum concepts and key professional abilities that graduates will need in order to practice nursing safely.

Establish Philosophical and Educational Approaches

Information about philosophical approaches suitable for nursing education, along with the values and beliefs of the curriculum development team, lead to the development of statements of philosophical approaches relevant for the school and curriculum. Reaching resolution about the philosophical approaches is a

critical milestone in curriculum development, because all aspects of the finalized curriculum should be congruent with espoused values and beliefs and the concepts that form the philosophical approaches. Along with the philosophical approaches is the identification of educational approaches consistent with them.

Formulate Curriculum Goals or Curriculum Outcome Statements

The curriculum goals or outcome statements reflect broad abilities of graduates, each representing an integration of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective actions. Goal or outcome statements are written to incorporate the desired abilities of graduates, philosophical approaches, and core curriculum concepts. They are a public statement of what can be expected of graduates.

Design the Curriculum and Plan Curriculum Implementation and Evaluation

The term *curriculum design* refers to the configuration of the course of studies. In designing the curriculum, faculty and other members of the design team determine level goals or outcomes/competencies; nursing courses, required non-nursing support courses, and elective courses; course sequencing; relationships between and among courses; delivery methods; and associated policies. Brief course descriptions and draft course goals or competencies are prepared for nursing courses. As the curriculum is being designed, plans for its implementation are discussed concurrently to assess its feasibility and how it can be introduced while the current curriculum is being phased out. Implementation planning also includes such matters as informing stakeholders, attending to contractual agreements and logistics, and planning ongoing faculty development.

Curriculum evaluation is an organized and thoughtful appraisal of those elements central to the course of studies undertaken by students, and of graduates' abilities. The aspects to be evaluated include the philosophical and educational approaches, curriculum goals or outcome statements, overall design, courses, strategies to ignite learning, interactions, learning climate, evaluation methods, implementation fidelity, curriculum policies, resources, and actual outcomes demonstrated by graduates. Like planning for implementation, planning curriculum evaluation should occur simultaneously with discussions about design.

Design Courses and Plan Course Implementation and Evaluation

Designing courses requires attention to the following components: purpose and description, course goals or course outcomes/competencies, strategies to ignite learning, concepts and content, classes, guidelines for student learning activities, opportunities for students to demonstrate learning, and evaluation of student learning. Each course must be congruent with the curriculum intent

and clearly relate to intended curriculum goals or outcomes. As a mirror of the process of designing the curriculum and planning curriculum implementation and evaluation, planning for course implementation and evaluation should occur concurrently with decision making about course design.

Implement the Curriculum, Conduct Formative Evaluation, and Refine

Curriculum implementation begins when the first course is introduced and continues for the life of the curriculum. Successful implementation is dependent on faculty and student adoption of the curriculum tenets and the use of congruent educational approaches and methods to evaluate learning. The curriculum evaluation plan is put into action simultaneously with curriculum implementation. Ongoing formative evaluation results in small refinements that ease implementation, fill identified gaps, and/or remove redundancies.

Conduct Summative Evaluation of the Curriculum

Once completely implemented, the entire curriculum is evaluated to determine whether all elements are appropriate and congruent with one another, and to ascertain graduates' success. Internal curriculum evaluation is undertaken by members of the school of nursing, whereas external curriculum evaluation is generally conducted as a part of program evaluation and approval or accreditation by provincial, state, regional, or national bodies.

Feedback Loops

The feedback loops in the model reflect the idea that at every stage of curriculum work, appraisals are made about the appropriateness and fit of one element with previous elements, and the possibility of modification. The feedback loops signify that the curriculum is dynamic, subject to change as information about its effectiveness and appropriateness is gathered. Additionally, the feedback loops illustrate the connections among the curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation activities and the core curriculum processes.

Interpersonal Dimensions of Curriculum Development

Interpersonal dynamics are a feature of all curriculum work. The nature of the dynamics is dependent on curriculum developers' talents, personalities, goals, knowledge, experiences, and values, and the culture of the school. Although the graphic depiction of the Model of Evidence-Informed, Context-Relevant, Unified Curriculum Development in Nursing Education can appear straightforward, its operationalization is not.

A wide range of thoughts, behaviors, and emotions can occur during curriculum development, including learning, conflict, cooperation, resistance, eagerness, formation of group alliances, power struggles, commitment to shared goals, sadness, and satisfaction. For curriculum development to be successful, it is important that all members feel recognized, valued, and appreciated for ideas they offer and the work they complete. The human dimension is a constant and requires attention even when the tasks and deadlines of curriculum development are pressing.

Curriculum deliberations occur in collaboration with colleagues whose values may be divergent. Because values affect perspectives and choices, they are a powerful (although sometimes unrecognized) influence on curriculum development. Consequently, it is incumbent upon curriculum developers to reflect on their ideals and beliefs, discuss them openly with colleagues, and consider how these influence their preferences about the developing curriculum. Clarification of individual and collective values is integral to curriculum development and can be essential in times of emotional debate or apparently irresolvable conflict.

The dynamics of influence and power are also part of curriculum development and its aftermath. Faculty members with either informal or formal power in the school may influence the process in directions not supported by all, and consequently, some faculty and other stakeholders might feel devalued, resentful, or powerless. New informal leaders can emerge during curriculum development with a resulting loss of influence by others. The processes of developing and implementing a new curriculum can lead to shifts in the dynamics within and outside the school, and with associated changes in the real or perceived advantages and disadvantages experienced by individuals. Relational conflicts, such as power struggles or incivility, may arise during curriculum development and these can have “injurious effects on both task- and social-based aspects of group effectiveness” (Manata, 2016).

Curriculum development and implementation represent a significant change for faculty members in which they progress from established ways of being, to a state of uncertainty, and then to new understandings and practices. Collegial support and reinforcement sustain this progress. Collectively, faculty can create and institute strategies to recognize their progress, offer encouragement to each other, and celebrate their successes. In these ways, both faculty cohesion and the curriculum are strengthened.

The interpersonal dimension of curriculum work is a matter that requires ongoing attention by all participants. The success of the curriculum is dependent on the dedication of all members, and this is most likely to develop when individuals communicate openly and supportively with one another, feel valued, and believe their ideas are contributing to quality nursing education.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Curriculum development in nursing is a scholarly and creative endeavor that faculty members and other stakeholders undertake with the aim of preparing graduates who will practice nursing professionally in constantly changing environments. There are many views of *curriculum* in the literature. However, in this text, the nursing curriculum is defined as the totality of the philosophical approaches, curriculum goals or outcomes, overall design, courses, strategies to ignite learning, delivery methods, interactions, learning climate, evaluation methods, curriculum policies, and resources. The Model of Evidence-Informed, Context-Relevant, Unified Curriculum Development in Nursing Education describes a process for developing a curriculum that is informed by evidence, relevant for the context in which the curriculum will be offered and graduates will work, and unified visually and conceptually. Core to the model are faculty development, ongoing appraisal, and scholarship. Curriculum development begins with the recognition that a new curriculum is needed and may seem to be complete when the newly created curriculum is implemented. However, development of an evidence-informed, context-relevant, unified curriculum is really a dynamic process, because evaluation and subsequent refinement are constant, even during implementation. Successful curriculum work is contingent on dedicated participants whose efforts are valued and who are supported during all aspects of curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation.

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