



PART



Preparation for Curriculum Development

Determining the Need and Gaining Support for Curriculum Development

CHAPTER PREVIEW

This chapter provides insight into considerations that precede a decision to undertake curriculum redesign and that can lead to faculty and stakeholder support for curriculum development. Although creation of a completely reconceptualized curriculum or revision of an existing one may seem the obvious answer to rectify identified curriculum shortcomings or to incorporate changes into nursing education practice, it is advisable to give thought to the support that can be obtained from those who would be involved. Because faculty members have the main responsibility for curriculum development, their endorsement is essential.

The rationale for curriculum redesign, extent of the curriculum development to be undertaken, the timeframe for completion, and strategies to gain support, are addressed. The core processes of curriculum work, as related to the chapter topics, are described, followed by a chapter summary. Synthesis activities include a case exemplifying reasons for curriculum development and ideas for analysis of the case. The chapter concludes with questions designed to help readers decide if circumstances are suitable to begin the formal process of curriculum development in individual settings.

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED IN THIS CHAPTER

- What are some factors and influences that prompt curriculum development or revision?
- What can influence the extent of curriculum development deemed to be necessary?
- Who are the key stakeholders in curriculum development?

- What are some strategies to gain faculty and stakeholder support for curriculum development?
- How can faculty and stakeholder readiness to engage in and support curriculum development or revision be assessed?
- How are the core processes of curriculum work (faculty development, ongoing appraisal, and scholarship) integrated into determination of the need and support for curriculum development?

Determining the Need for Curriculum Development

The idea of engaging in curriculum development generally arises among a small group of faculty members and possibly other stakeholders (e.g., practitioners, administrators, educational and community partners, students, graduates) who have a vested interest in the school of nursing, its curriculum, and graduates. Thoughts of curriculum development are proposed when this group believes that the current curriculum is no longer adequate to prepare students to practice competently in the healthcare and societal contexts they will encounter when they graduate. Identifying reasons why curriculum development is necessary, the extent of the curriculum development that might be required, participants, and possible timelines are important ideas to present to the school leader and colleagues when seeking their support for curriculum development.

Reasons for Curriculum Development

The purpose of nursing programs is to educate students, who as nurses, will provide quality nursing care in a changing healthcare environment, thereby contributing to the health and quality of life of individuals, families, groups, and/or communities. Situations within and outside a school of nursing that adversely affect its ability to achieve this purpose and that, consequently, might threaten its stability, success, or reputation, lead to thoughts of modifying the curriculum or creating a new one.

Ongoing changes within a school of nursing context can influence faculty to consider the possibility of curriculum development. Some changes might include:

- Resource availability
- Faculty numbers and/or expertise
- Student profiles
- Introduction of new ideas by stakeholders and/or faculty
- Dissatisfaction with the status quo
- Internal curriculum evaluation results
- External program evaluation or school review results

Changing circumstances within the context of the parent educational institution might also lead to a belief that curriculum development is timely. Some examples might be changes in:

- Academic policy directions or priorities
- Institutional budget
- Educational technologies
- Library resources and services
- Faculty and staff contracts

Similarly, altered situations outside the educational institution can be important signals to faculty and other stakeholders that curriculum development is required to ensure that the curriculum is context relevant. Changes might occur in:

- Nursing and educational paradigms
- Organization of nursing education throughout a state or province
- Graduates' success rates on the NCLEX-RN®
- Competition from other schools
- Enrollment demand
- New graduates' ability to meet employer expectations
- Accreditation or approval standards
- Profile of the nursing workforce
- The healthcare environment and provision of health care
- Health profile of the population
- Professional and/or governmental standards, regulations, and priorities
- Priorities of health and community agencies

A compelling single situation, or a combination of circumstances, can result in the view that the existing curriculum is no longer working as effectively as desired, is outmoded in some way, or is not as responsive to the context as it should be. The consideration of curriculum development or revision can arise gradually when the following occur:

- New educational philosophies and/or methods emerge.
- It becomes apparent that a series of planned alterations in the curriculum or unplanned curriculum drift (Woods, 2015) has resulted in a loss of curriculum unity.
- Anticipated changes (such as planned retirements or budget cuts) will adversely affect curriculum implementation.

Alternatively, curriculum development can be unavoidable and even urgent because of profound contextual changes within the school of nursing, parent institution, or the environment outside the educational agency.

Continual changes in health and healthcare systems, technologies, population profiles, expectations, demands, and predictions about the future of health care have led to the realization that the education of nurses, and therefore, nursing curricula, must be subjected to evaluation, revision, and maybe even dramatic change (Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, & Day, 2010; Institute of Medicine, 2010). Nursing faculty are challenged and required to develop relevant, evidence-informed curricula to prepare nurses for new and future roles and responsibilities consistent with rapid changes in population health, global perspectives, and healthcare systems. The desire to create and maintain an evidence-informed, context-relevant, unified curriculum arises from faculty members' professional imperative to ensure that graduates will be able to provide quality nursing care and contribute meaningfully to the health and well-being of clients and society in local and global contexts.

Extent of Curriculum Development

Those initiating the idea of curriculum development should give thought to the extent of development they believe necessary to achieve an evidence-informed, context-relevant, unified curriculum that will build students' professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgment. The scope of curriculum development can encompass:

- Limited revision to correct identified gaps or overlaps in the existing curriculum
- Major revision of an existing curriculum, so that many curriculum elements are substantially modified and curriculum unity is preserved or achieved
- Creation of a completely new and reconceptualized curriculum that is not based upon an existing curriculum

A revision extends well beyond the ongoing curriculum refinement (i.e., fine-tuning activities such as annual updating of course readings) in which faculty members routinely engage. Both extensive curriculum revision and the development of a new curriculum entail dedicated effort by the total faculty group and committed stakeholders. Therefore, it is wise to give careful thought to which aspects of the current curriculum are working well, which are outmoded, and/or which are redundant. This analysis is important when trying to gain support for curriculum development.

Should the existing curriculum be revised, or should a new curriculum be created? There is no formulaic answer to this question. The response results from a comprehensive and holistic assessment and interpretation of many factors and faculty members' and stakeholders' subsequent judgment about the situation. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- The time period since the curriculum was originally created or significantly revised

- The nature and extent of altered circumstances in the school, such as new people in key positions (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2016)
- The nature and extent of altered circumstances beyond the school
- Faculty members' and stakeholders' emotional and intellectual investment in the existing curriculum
- Energy for change
- Areas of the existing curriculum that are unsatisfactory to faculty, students, graduates, or stakeholders
- Results of ongoing internal curriculum evaluations
- Results of external curriculum evaluation, such as approval or accreditation reviews

In general, a desire for extensive change in a major element of the curriculum, such as its philosophical approaches (and the resultant curriculum goals or curriculum outcome statements, educational approaches, and evaluation methods), leads to the creation of a new curriculum. Similarly, significant changes in the nature and availability of professional practice placements could bring forth ideas of starting anew with curriculum development.

In contrast, a conviction that, for example, altered course sequencing could yield better results for students, would likely result in curriculum revision. In the same vein, the recognition that students are not achieving a particular curriculum goal or learning outcome would probably lead to revision within the existing curriculum, but not necessarily to the development of a new curriculum. However, an important aspect of this revision is that the changes must be appraised within the context of the total curriculum to ensure that they are logical, conceptually unified, and consistent with the basic curriculum tenets. See **Table 5-1** for a summary of the purposes of each type of curriculum development.

Timeframe for Curriculum Development

The timeframe for completion of the work is another consideration when proposing curriculum revision or the development of an entirely new curriculum. How quickly is the redesigned curriculum needed? When might the new or revised curriculum be implemented? These and other factors require examination when thinking about the start and completion dates for the curriculum development project. Each must be assessed within the context of all the other ideas presented in this chapter.

First is the urgency of the curriculum redesign. This is influenced by the factors that prompted consideration of curriculum development initially. If, for example, two successive groups of graduates have had an unacceptable failure rate on licensing examinations, then there may be pressure to improve the curriculum quickly. Similarly, a change in services in local healthcare agencies

Table 5-1: Extent and Purposes of Curriculum Development	
Extent of Curriculum Development	Purposes
<p>Limited Curriculum Revision Within one or two course(s): changes to one or more major course elements (e.g., goals or competencies, concepts, content, evaluation of student achievement)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct gaps or redundancies • Align or sequence learning experiences more logically
<p>Major Curriculum Revision Changes to one or more curriculum foundation(s) (concepts, professional abilities, philosophical approaches, educational approaches) with resultant modifications to all courses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate current and anticipated contextual realities • Include current perspectives • “modernize” a successful curriculum • Achieve curriculum integrity and unity
<p>Creation of a New Curriculum Reconceptualized curriculum not based on current curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build an evidence-informed, unified curriculum relevant for current and future contexts

may necessitate an immediate refocusing of professional practice courses. Conversely, the immediacy of altering an undergraduate curriculum to reflect a slowly changing trend in local demographics may not be as great.

Faculty and stakeholder understanding of the nature of an evidence-informed, context-relevant, unified curriculum and their knowledge of curriculum development processes also have an effect on a probable timeframe. If extensive faculty development will be necessary, time must be allotted for this.

The annual work cycle of the school of nursing and the number of full-time faculty members will influence the schedule for beginning and completing the curriculum development process. Is there a semester when full-time faculty members are less busy with teaching and able to devote concentrated time to curriculum development? If so, consideration should be given to the amount of work that could be achieved in those time periods. If not, the amount of curriculum development time that can be integrated into the ongoing work of the school requires careful assessment.

A critical factor to review when contemplating a timeframe is the collective readiness for change among faculty members and their belief in their ability to develop and enact the change (Kelly, Hegarty, Barry, Dyer, & Horgan, 2017). Because “readiness for change is culturally embedded” (Latta, 2009, p. 25), it is worthwhile to contemplate the culture of the school and the parent institution, in particular, whether innovation is common and frequent, or whether change occurs at a measured pace. The shared meaning that faculty members give to change and to the current curriculum, and the shared meaning within the institution about the value and meaning of change, innovation, and stability (Latta, 2009) will affect views about curriculum change, and thus, the time required to develop and implement a redesigned curriculum.

The nature and rapidity of institutional decision-making processes give an indication of the time to completion. Do curriculum decisions need to be approved by several committees within and beyond the school of nursing, or are decisions made relatively quickly and locally, with the expectation that implementation will soon follow? The usual time period from initial decisions to enactment of the decisions will affect the interval allotted for curriculum development and implementation.

Finally, when thought is given to a timeframe for curriculum development, a mindful review should be conducted of the people who might be involved in order to identify those likely to be supporters and resisters. How much time can the supporters realistically be expected to give to curriculum development? How much time will be taken up with overcoming resistance and winning support? The motivation and time commitments of those who will be involved will affect the expected completion date. Preparation of a tentative schedule for curriculum development will give participants some idea of the amount of time and work being asked of them, and this can affect their support.

Gaining Support for Curriculum Development

Curriculum development cannot proceed on the conviction of only a few faculty members. In general, all those who will be affected by a change should be involved in the planning (Marquis & Huston, 2012). Because curriculum development, and the subsequent implementation, represents a significant change in the work activities and interactions of faculty and stakeholders, it cannot be undertaken without their endorsement and involvement. It is necessary for those initiating the idea of curriculum development to mobilize support and minimize likely opposition (Glatthorn, Boschee, Whitehead, & Boschee, 2016).

Advocates of curriculum development seek support from the school leader, faculty colleagues, community and healthcare stakeholders, and students. The endorsement of representatives from each group strengthens the case for proceeding with curriculum development, because all are participants in the school of nursing and its curriculum (Adams et al., 2015; Keogh, Fourie, Watson, & Gay, 2010; Sidebotham, Walters, Chipperfield, & Gamble, 2017).

Gaining Support from the School Leader

First and foremost is support from the formal leader of the school for curriculum development. Discussing the possibility of curriculum development with the school leader before introducing the idea to colleagues is a strategic move to determine if there is likely to be administrative support for such an endeavor.

If the school leader endorses the idea of curriculum development, then it is likely that resources will be allocated to the work (Sportsman & Pleasant, 2017). Without tangible institutional resources, curriculum work cannot proceed (Oliver & Hyun, 2011). Moreover, the school leader's influence can be crucial in convincing those who are hesitant about curriculum development to engage in the process.

When the idea of curriculum development is raised with the school leader, there are several matters that could be brought forth, such as those listed in **Box 5-1**. At the initial meeting, these ideas can be introduced to elicit the leader's reactions.

Precise information about each point in Box 5-1 will not be available at the outset. Yet, thoughtful identification of the academic and administrative aspects of curriculum development will increase the credibility of those proposing this possibility to the school leader. The goals of a meeting with the school's formal leader are to gain support for the idea of initiating curriculum development

BOX 5-1 MATTERS TO DISCUSS WITH THE SCHOOL LEADER

1. Need for curriculum development
2. Extent of faculty support
3. Leadership of curriculum development
4. Estimated time for development and implementation of a redesigned curriculum
5. Effect on other work:
 - Teaching (classroom, online, professional practice, laboratory)
 - Student advisement
 - Scholarship
 - Engagement in school and institutional service activities
6. Faculty, student, and stakeholder involvement
7. Resources needed:
 - Support personnel
 - Materials
 - Technological equipment
 - Physical space
 - Faculty release time
 - Funding
8. Positive consequences of curriculum development for the school

and a commitment to examine ways to provide resources for the undertaking. Endorsement from the school leader is essential for curriculum work to begin.

Gaining Support from Faculty Colleagues

The support of faculty colleagues, particularly full-time faculty, is essential. They will assume the largest responsibility for curriculum development and implementation, and without their endorsement and commitment to be involved, curriculum development cannot proceed.

Although a small group of faculty and stakeholders may initiate the idea of curriculum development, it is ultimately the decision of the total group of faculty, administrators, and possibly other stakeholders about whether to undertake curriculum development, and, if so, the extent of development and the timelines for completion.

Gaining faculty colleagues' support for curriculum development involves an appeal to logic and values. Neither alone is sufficient. The precise approach will, of course, be dependent on the organization and the people involved.

Those proposing curriculum development must be able to articulate clearly why they believe curriculum development is necessary. It is important to present factual data about the deficiencies in the current curriculum (Wilkin & Dyer, cited in Latta, 2009), how they are evident, the consequences of those deficiencies, and the thinking that led to the conclusion that curriculum modification is required.

The perceived need for curriculum development can be linked to values held by faculty, students, and graduates of the school of nursing, and/or the educational institution itself. For example, if the institution takes pride in being innovative and a leader in education, and in providing quality student experiences, then curriculum development can be presented as a means to support those values. Innovations (such as a changed curriculum) are most likely to be accepted if the new idea is consistent with the values and culture of the organization and its members, and with the ideal cultural commitments (Greenhalgh, Robert, Bate, Macfarlane, & Kyriadidou, 2005; Latta, 2009). Finally, presenting general ideas about possible alternate curricula can extend colleagues' thinking and increase their acceptance of the idea of redesigning the curriculum. In **Table 5-2**, ideas are offered that could be helpful in convincing colleagues that curriculum development is needed.

It is important to consider the best way to seek support. Should colleagues be approached individually or collectively? Clearly, there are advantages and drawbacks to both (see **Table 5-3** for an analysis of approaching colleagues individually or collectively). A combination may be appropriate, first talking with colleagues individually to gain the acceptance of informal leaders, and then

Table 5-2: Examples to Convince Colleagues of Need for Curriculum Development	
Appeal to Logic	Appeal to Values
<p>Need for curriculum change or development, as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficiencies in current curriculum • Unsatisfactory external and/or internal evaluations • Trends requiring new approaches • Current literature <p>Requirement to provide a curriculum responsive to healthcare and societal needs</p> <p>Suggestions about possible alternative curricula</p> <p>Possible positive consequences of curriculum development such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthened congruence with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational mission and values • Personal and professional values 2. Favorable external and internal evaluations 3. Student satisfaction, leading to enhanced work environment for faculty 4. Increased employability of graduates <p>Enhanced appeal of the school to potential faculty members and applicants</p> <p>Possibility of obtaining funding for curriculum development</p>	<p>Opportunity to shape the curriculum</p> <p>Desire for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional and personal growth of students and curriculum developers • Competent graduates • Enhancement of the school's prestige and profile • Status as innovators, leaders, and providers of quality student experiences <p>Opportunity for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal distinction and prestige • Innovation and transformation • Organizational preeminence • Enhanced reputation of individuals and school <p>Possible negative consequences of avoiding curriculum development, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased appeal and marketability of the school to potential faculty and student applicants, and to current students, and faculty • Decreased marketability of graduates to employers • Unrealized funding opportunities • Unfavorable internal and/or external reviews • Diminished prestige

presenting ideas to a larger group. Involvement of informal leaders is a means to share the leadership for introducing the idea of curriculum development, a strategy consistent with producing “leadership through interactions” (Denis, Langley, & Sergi, 2012, p. 214). The decision about how to introduce the idea of curriculum development to colleagues will be influenced by knowledge of individual faculty members, interpersonal dynamics in the school, and the credibility of those seeking support for curriculum change.

The importance of listening to colleagues when seeking support cannot be overemphasized. Their perspectives are important and worthy of attention, because they are being asked to take on a large endeavor. Colleagues need to feel that their concerns have been accurately heard and taken into account in subsequent decision making. Careful listening is a means to gain information from colleagues whose support is needed, and the act of listening, in itself, positively affects the influence of the listener (Ames, Maissen, & Brockner, 2012).

Gaining Support from Community and Healthcare Stakeholders

There is no set sequence for gaining stakeholder support after preliminary agreement from the school leader and faculty colleagues. However, stakeholder

Table 5-3: Advantages and Disadvantages of Approaching Colleagues Individually or Collectively to Gain Support for Curriculum Development		
Approach	Advantages	Disadvantages
Individual	Freer expression and exploration of ideas Less threatening Quick response or possible decision Greater willingness to share experiences In-depth, thoughtful response possible Personal consultation valued	One viewpoint; no collective sharing of ideas Time required to collect and compile ideas from several individuals Discomfort resulting from disagreement Pressure to conform
Collective	Group response more broad Sharing of many ideas Opportunity to use democratic or consensual processes, which strengthen a decision to proceed Increased awareness of others' strengths Opportunity to learn from others' feedback Improved faculty bonding by uniting to reach common goal Shared thinking for responses, resulting in a stronger position Less time-consuming Opportunity for group to make more informed assessments of need for curriculum development	Delayed response or decision (many ideas to be considered before achieving consensus) Time required to share all experiences relative to decision Potential group veto of curriculum change Undue influence by strong group members Groupthink

involvement in early and subsequent stages of curriculum development strengthens bonds between schools of nursing and those involved (Cambers, 2010) and can result in a curriculum with widespread support.

When schools of nursing are contemplating curriculum development, they are usually experiencing challenges that are known to community and health-care partners. Some are shared by the partners, such as overcrowded student placements. Simultaneously, those partners are experiencing their own challenges and may welcome curricular changes that will enhance the situation in their agencies. It can be productive to arrange individual appointments with the nursing leaders of the school's largest partners to inform them that curriculum development is being considered and to determine preliminary support for the idea of curriculum modification.

Topics that might be addressed during the meeting include:

- Shared challenges
- The school's recognition of limitations and challenges within the current curriculum, particularly those most relevant to the nursing leader's organization
- Factors that will affect a decision to proceed with curriculum development, including stakeholder support

- The nursing leader's general ideas about the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for nursing practice in the future
- The desired involvement of members of partner organizations if curriculum development is undertaken

The meeting can end with a request for the nursing leader's endorsement for curriculum development. Furthermore, this is an opportunity to alert the leader that more detailed information gathering will be undertaken about the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of future graduates, if a decision to undertake curriculum development is reached.

Gaining Support from Students

Students have many ideas about how the curriculum they are experiencing can be improved, and often they expect changes to be made as soon as they voice those ideas. Therefore, their support for curriculum development is usually readily given, with the implicit expectation that their concerns about gaps or overlaps are corrected and their ideas about new areas to include are realized.

Student support for curriculum development can be sought through the nursing student council or in brief meetings during class time. It is important to emphasize that if curriculum development proceeds, time will be necessary to gather data (including data from them) and for the development work, and that changes will not be instantaneous. Therefore, they are being asked to support the idea of curriculum redesign for future students. When the possibility of curriculum development is explained to students, they are usually eager to “pay it forward” with the view of making positive curricular changes for their future colleagues.

Some may argue that requesting student support early is unnecessary and raises expectations of immediate change. Our view is that students are the ones most affected by curriculum decisions and they are required to function within the boundaries of those decisions. Therefore, just as clients are entitled to participate in decisions about all aspects of their care (including the possibility of changes in care), so too are students entitled to be informed and involved in educational planning and decision making.

Responding to Initial Objections

Although some faculty members may be enthusiastic about the idea of curriculum development, others may have a different view. It can be expected that some will feel hesitant and others may resist the possibility of curriculum development, and thus, change. Overcoming initial objections is foundational to winning faculty and stakeholders' support. To ignore opposition will likely

result in a failure to proceed and/or in slow and resentful involvement. Therefore, it is wise to anticipate, recognize, and respond to objections promptly.

First, challenges about the accuracy of information that illustrates the need for curriculum development, or the conclusions drawn, can be anticipated. This may reflect an honest, intellectual disagreement, a deeply held belief in the value of the current curriculum, a general response to change, or opposition to those proposing curriculum development.

When reasons for curriculum development are questioned, it is tempting to invite challengers to explain their position. This is a strategy to be used with caution, because a protracted dispute about who is right or which facts are correct is not productive. Such disagreements can annoy or even alienate others, who might then view curriculum development as a potentially endless series of conflicts. In the face of criticism about the reasons for curriculum development, it is more constructive to respond that the reasons to proceed are compelling and to acknowledge that not all might share that view.

Yet, it is important not to dismiss the opposition to curriculum development. Those objecting may have valuable insights that merit consideration and they are entitled to voice their views. Thus, as in many other matters, faculty leading the discussion need to listen respectfully to the objections, respond constructively, and ensure that the general discussion moves forward.

It may be necessary to enumerate the potential risks of avoiding curriculum development. These can include the possibility of unfavorable external reviews by approval or accrediting bodies, decreased ability to attract students and faculty, difficulty retaining faculty, and unrealized funding opportunities.

Some faculty may feel so stretched with their current workloads that even the idea of curriculum development and the work it will entail is overwhelming. The time required for this endeavor can seem daunting and could be a real barrier. It is important, therefore, to recognize and acknowledge that curriculum development is a large undertaking, and that the reality of workloads and available time needs to be explored thoroughly with the school leader and faculty members. It may be that competing demands make curriculum development impossible. If so, the school leader may need to be open to having some members delay or give up some responsibilities, at least for a short period, to allow the process to unfold.

To win the support of particular individuals, it is wise to identify the criticisms they have voiced about the current curriculum and acknowledge the aspects they value. Through individual or small-group meetings, participants can be reminded that curriculum development is an opportunity to alter or eliminate the weaker aspects of the current curriculum. Additionally, it is essential to emphasize that their active involvement in the curriculum development process could also lead to maintaining or updating cherished parts of the

existing curriculum. Affirming that strengths of the present curriculum could be retained might induce cooperation.

Financial constraints will be a concern for the school leader and may also be raised by other faculty members. Curriculum development takes time, and faculty and staff time is costly. Therefore, an acknowledgment that resources are needed for curriculum development and an assurance that this matter will be discussed with the school leader, and subsequently with faculty and stakeholders, will go a long way in gaining support. It is also helpful to identify possible funding sources for curriculum development, such as internal university funds or foundations known to support innovations in nursing education. Certainly, adequate system resources are needed for change to occur and be sustained (Greenhalgh et al., 2005; Oliver & Hyun, 2011).

Another reason for opposing the idea of curriculum development is that those proposing it are not sufficiently respected by colleagues, either generally or more specifically in relation to curriculum work. It is essential that those advocating curriculum development have good relationships with colleagues and are seen as having credible views about curriculum. If not, the proposal for curriculum change may be rejected. Identifying whether personalities or perceived lack of curriculum knowledge might be the basis for resistance is a painful process. Those who are recommending curriculum development might consider if their ideas are usually sought and supported by colleagues, and if others generally choose to work with them. If not, it would be wise to leave the initiation of the idea to others who are respected within the faculty and stakeholder group. If this is not possible, some interpersonal work must be done before support will be gained. Objections that may be raised to the idea of curriculum development and possible responses are summarized in **Table 5-4**.

Deciding to Proceed with Curriculum Development

It is unlikely that all objections to curriculum development will be overcome or that all faculty members will enthusiastically endorse proceeding with curriculum development. Nonetheless, once the school leader supports the idea, potential curriculum team members have individually and collectively considered the reasons for and against curriculum development, and a majority concur that curriculum development is necessary, the process should be ready to proceed.

Because faculty members will assume the greatest responsibility for the work of curriculum development, their support is the foundation upon which the quality of the curriculum development process will rest. Therefore, faculty members' endorsement of the decision to proceed is essential. The decision may be reached by consensus, or it may be formalized by a motion that specifies a timeline for implementation of a redesigned curriculum, depending on the typical decision-making procedures in the school of nursing.

Table 5-4: Responses to Initial Objections to the Idea of Curriculum Change	
Nature of Objections	Responses
Challenge to evidence for curriculum development	Respond that reasons are compelling.
Satisfaction with current curriculum	Emphasize the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of offering a curriculum that will maximize student learning and graduates' success • Opportunity to be on the cutting edge of change and transformation in nursing education • Potential for personal and professional growth during curriculum development
Fear that treasured part of the curriculum will be lost	Affirm that as curriculum work proceeds, aspects of the current curriculum may be retained. Highlight that active involvement is the only means to ensure a satisfactory curriculum.
Time commitment required for curriculum development	Present possible funding opportunities for curriculum development. Assure that there will be discussion with the school leader about possible altered work assignments. State that individuals' involvement will influence the curriculum development process, and thus the time required.
Fear that curriculum development will negatively affect scholarship activities	Comment that there will be discussion with the school leader about possible altered work assignments. State that curriculum development is a responsibility of the academic role. Underscore that scholarship is an inherent part of curriculum work, and that scholarship projects can be developed about, and during, curriculum work.
Apparent lack of resources to support curriculum development	Respond that resources will be discussed with the school leader and faculty members.
Lack of support for faculty proposing change	Encourage faculty who are viewed as being highly credible to initiate the idea of curriculum development.

Once a decision about moving forward has been reached, it is usual to advise students and stakeholders, some of whom may subsequently become involved in the curriculum development process. Informing others beyond the school of nursing makes public the intention to proceed with curriculum development and creates an expectation of change.

Core Processes of Curriculum Work

Faculty Development

Faculty development during individual and group discussion about the need for curriculum development is most likely to be informal. Some members will

want to know what the process of curriculum development entails. Similarly, stakeholders may require information about what curriculum redesign might mean for them. Provision of this information will expand their understanding of what they are being asked to endorse.

Ongoing Appraisal

During the phase of determining the need and gaining support for curriculum development, the initiators constantly appraise others' reactions to their ideas and approaches, both simultaneously and retrospectively. They then revise their approach as necessary until a firm decision is reached about whether or not to proceed with curriculum development.

Scholarship

It is unlikely that a scholarship project will be planned about gaining support for curriculum development. However, a retrospective report and analysis of the processes that led to the proposal for curriculum redesign, and subsequent endorsement, could be prepared for submission to a journal. An article such as this could be helpful to faculty members elsewhere who wish to initiate the idea of curriculum redesign. In addition, a retrospective qualitative study could be undertaken to determine how the process was experienced by those whose support was being sought and whether there were particular features that were salient in their decision to support curriculum redesign.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Faculty and stakeholder support for curriculum development is essential for the process to begin and for the achievement of a successful outcome. Endorsement of curriculum development is accomplished through open and thoughtful consideration of the reasons for curriculum development and the factors that might be limiting a willingness to proceed. Attention to the values of individual and collective faculty, the scope of curriculum development that might be necessary, and the timeframe envisioned for the undertaking will influence whether approval is gained. The impetus and decision to proceed must be thoughtfully reviewed, because curriculum development is intensive and requires ongoing faculty and stakeholder dedication and involvement. Informal faculty development and ongoing appraisal continue throughout the processes of determining the need and gaining support for curriculum development. Scholarship related to this phase of curriculum development can be undertaken, likely retrospectively.

SYNTHESIS ACTIVITIES

The Grand Banks University College of Nursing case illustrates some ideas about the need for curriculum development and support for undertaking curriculum work. The questions following the case can guide a critical analysis of the situation. Questions are then provided that might assist readers as they consider the need and support for curriculum development in their settings.

■ Grand Banks University College of Nursing

Grand Banks University College of Nursing offers a 4-year, upper division, accredited nursing program, with professional practice beginning in the first semester of the third year. The current curriculum was introduced 7 years previously and limited revisions have occurred periodically throughout the years. The last accreditation review was 3 years ago.

Several faculty members feel there is a need for changes to the undergraduate nursing curriculum. Dr. Susan Sullivan and Dr. Michaela Tanovich believe that there is insufficient professional practice in acute care adult medical and surgical settings, the locations where most graduates are first employed. Dr. Juan De Silva thinks there is insufficient emphasis on outpatient ambulatory care and health promotion. All three faculty members have examples of comments from nursing staff that suggest that students are inadequately prepared in these professional practice areas. They believe that the curriculum should be changed to have only 1 prenursing year and 3 years of nursing courses. In this way, more professional practice time could be scheduled, particularly in the areas of concern to them.

Along with these concerns, there is a general sense among faculty teaching in the first nursing courses that many students have difficulty transferring and applying knowledge from their 2 years of social science and science courses. Some students have described their first 2 years as a “proving ground” for the nursing courses, and although they need good marks to continue in the program, they don’t value the theory they have learned in the pre-nursing courses. They view their entry into the third year as the real start of the nursing curriculum.

Dr. De Silva agreed to present the group’s ideas at the monthly meeting of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, which has representatives from each of the four nursing semesters (i.e., the final 2 years) of the curriculum. The committee members listened attentively, but in general, were not convinced of Dr. De Silva’s position. Although Dr. De Silva emphasized the idea that the curriculum might be approaching its natural expiry date, the committee members were unwilling to accept this idea without some substantive data.

One curriculum committee member wondered aloud if Dr. De Silva's ideas about adult medical–surgical nursing and ambulatory care were reflective of personal interests more than curricular needs. However, another agreed that some students' application of science and social science was weak as they started the nursing courses. A third committee member stated that even if the need for curriculum change became convincing, she did not believe that the ideas proposed by Dr. De Silva were necessarily what the curricular emphases should be. She stated there was a growing need for home health care in the community, and opined that perhaps this would be a curriculum direction to consider. Finally, a long-time faculty member who had participated in the development of three undergraduate curricula asked Dr. De Silva, “Do you have any idea of what it would take to change from 2 years to 3 years of nursing?”

The Committee Chair drew the discussion to a close and stated that, at present, there seemed to be no compelling reason for curriculum change. She told Dr. De Silva that he was welcome to return to another meeting of the Curriculum Committee when he had substantive data to support his contention that curriculum change was necessary.

■ Questions and Activities for Critical Analysis of the Grand Banks University College of Nursing Case

1. What factors or influences might propel Grand Banks nursing faculty toward a review of the present curriculum and consideration of change?
2. Assess the approach that Dr. De Silva used with the Curriculum Committee.
3. Propose other methods Drs. De Silva, Sullivan, and Tanovich might have used to raise their concerns and analyze the possible effectiveness of these methods.
4. Describe the data Drs. De Silva, Sullivan, and Tanovich would need in order to convince others of the need for curriculum change. How could these data be obtained? How could the data be presented in a compelling manner?
5. Suggest how support for curriculum change could be obtained. What could be the sources of support for curriculum development? Sources of resistance?
6. Hypothesize about how faculty who developed the current curriculum might respond to criticisms of it. What are some possible replies to their responses?

7. Recommend a diplomatic means to caution nursing faculty to consider whether allegiance to their nursing practice specialties might overshadow the broader perspectives of nursing required in contemporary undergraduate nursing education.
8. Is it reasonable to think that 7 years is the natural expiry date of a curriculum? Why or why not?

■ **Questions and Activities for Consideration of the Need and Support for Curriculum Development in Readers' Settings**

1. Explain why curriculum development is necessary now. What is the evidence for proposing that curriculum work proceed? How compelling are the ideas?
2. From whom is support needed for the idea of curriculum development? How can formal and informal faculty leaders be involved? Who are the stakeholders, and how can their support be gained?
3. Propose ideas to gain faculty support. Determine the advantages and disadvantages of approaching colleagues individually or collectively. If both approaches would be suitable, what would the sequence be?
4. How can evidence be presented about the need for curriculum development so it is convincing to faculty colleagues?
5. Consider how extensive curriculum development should be. Might the development be a revision of the current curriculum or a completely new curriculum? Develop rationale for the proposal about the extent of curriculum development.
6. What could be the impact of participation in curriculum development and faculty development on faculty members' other commitments?
7. Hypothesize about possible objections to curriculum development and develop responses to the objections. List the potential risks if curriculum development is not undertaken now.
8. If faculty numbers and resources to support curriculum development are limited, yet the reasons for curriculum development are compelling, how could curriculum work be initiated?
9. In addition to the need for curriculum development, what else should be discussed with the school leader in a preliminary way?
10. Describe the resources required for successful curriculum development. What funding sources are available outside the school of nursing?

11. Are there sufficient resources (people, time, physical, material) to proceed with curriculum development now?
12. Is informal agreement to proceed sufficient, or would a formal motion be preferable? Why?
13. If agreement to proceed is obtained, which stakeholders should be informed of the decision? Which stakeholders should be invited to become members of the curriculum development team?
14. What other considerations require thoughtful attention?
15. Propose scholarship activities that might be considered.

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