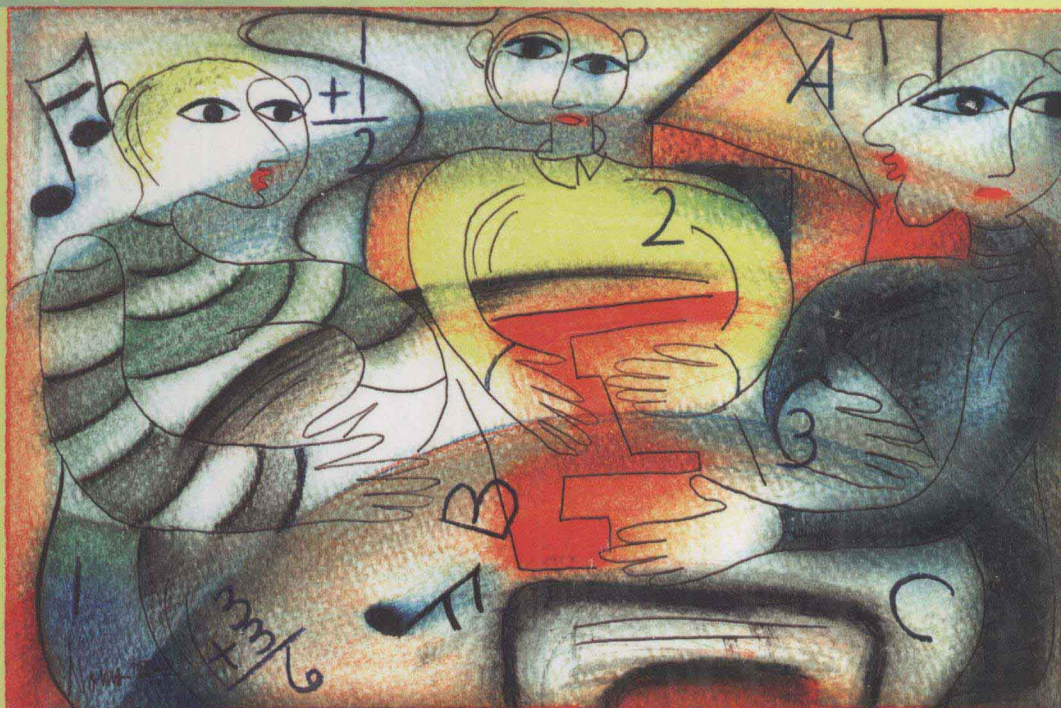


DEVELOPING THE *Curriculum*



Sixth Edition

Peter F. Oliva

Developing the Curriculum

SIXTH EDITION

Peter F. Oliva



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Preface

In its sixth edition, this textbook remains a comprehensive analysis of the *process* of curriculum development. Process is the main feature that distinguishes this text from many other curriculum texts. The book illuminates how curriculum workers go about the process of developing the curriculum. The book's major purpose is to give the student a comprehensive view of the field.

Basically, the substance of the text has not changed. However, a number of changes have been made to make the book more current and more usable in the classroom. Key revisions to be found in this sixth edition are:

- Thorough updating to reflect new materials and changes that have taken place since the fifth edition was published.
- Reorganization of the chapter on controversial issues in curriculum development.
- Incorporation of views of many curriculum developers and theorists not included in the previous edition.
- The addition of many Internet websites at the end of some chapters, especially Chapter 15.

The passing of time has not altered the process described in the first five editions. Like its preceding editions this book is intended for students in courses such as Curriculum Development, Curriculum Planning, and Curriculum Improvement. It is meant to be especially helpful to preservice and inservice curriculum coordinators, principals, assistant principals for curriculum, department chairpersons, instructional team leaders, and grade coordinators, who will find the book to be a practical guide to curriculum development.

This text has proved useful at the master's degree level through the doctoral level. It fits especially well those courses in curriculum development that are required of persons preparing to be instructional leaders, administrators, and supervisors. In addition, the book contains a great deal of information and suggestions suitable to inservice professionals. Wherever possible, I have included examples of practices from actual schools.

The text has a particular sequence to it. It begins with an examination of the theoretical dimensions of curriculum development. After curriculum has been defined and its relationship to instruction clarified, the text looks at roles of various personnel who have primary responsibility for developing the curriculum. A number of models of curriculum development are then described.

Following the model I have presented in Chapter 5, subsequent chapters outline a step-by-step process for engaging in curriculum development. Integrating curriculum

and instruction, the model is a distillation of ideas of many thinkers and researchers on curriculum, instruction, and supervision. The process of curriculum development is examined from stating philosophical beliefs and broad aims of education to specifying curriculum and instructional goals and objectives, implementing the curriculum and instruction, and evaluating instruction and the curriculum. Because the primary focus of the book is on curriculum development, less emphasis is given to instruction, a whole area of study in itself.

Each chapter begins with a number of cognitive objectives (competencies) to be achieved by the student on completion of study of the chapter. Several questions for discussion are found at the end of each chapter. The supplementary exercises that follow the questions for discussion are designed to serve two purposes: (1) to reinforce the goals and content of each chapter and (2) to extend the treatment of topics beyond the material presented in the chapter. These exercises range in difficulty from simple to complex. Some provide for individual student work, others for group work. Some require only thought and opinion; others call for extensive research. In one respect the discussion questions and supplementary exercises substitute for an instructor's manual. Instructors are encouraged to select those exercises most appropriate for their own students. Instructors who wish to do so can easily turn many of the supplementary exercises into questions for class discussion. To further enhance the usefulness of the text, each chapter concludes with an often extensive bibliography of pertinent books and journal articles. At the end of some of the chapters you will find, in addition to references to printed material, references to sources of additional information and nonprint materials as well as pertinent websites. I have resisted well-intended suggestions to limit end-of-chapter exercises to a few thought-provoking activities and to provide a brief preselected bibliography. I have preferred instead to offer many activities from which the instructor may choose and to provide references presenting many views to help students doing research on a topic.

Both old and new references have been deliberately woven into the text to clarify and support points under discussion. The old references are included in order to (1) acquaint the student with persons who have contributed to the field, (2) trace the development of curricular thought, and (3) show that earlier thinking was often ahead of its time. The new references are included, of course, to present current views on curriculum development.

At the end of the book is an Appendix which lists websites of important sources of curricular and other educational data. Topics covered are ERIC Clearinghouses, the Regional Educational Laboratory Network, National Research and Development Centers, the Institute of Education Sciences, and Curriculum Journals.

The book is not meant to be a one-person prescription on curriculum development. I approach this text from the standpoint of an instructor who wishes students to obtain an overview of curriculum development. I have conscientiously tried to acquaint the reader with people, places, and ideas from both the past and present. Where I have treated controversial issues, that is issues on which there is considerable disagreement, I have made a great effort to portray all sides to the issue, citing both proponents and opponents.

One clarifying note about the structure of the book. You will note the rubrics of Curriculum Past, Curriculum Present, and Curriculum Future in Chapter 9. The book

returns to Curriculum Present and, to a lesser extent, Curriculum Future in Chapter 15. I chose to include in Curriculum Present, Chapter 9, those curriculum developments which were more established and less controversial. I have presented in Chapter 15 a number of recent developments that are for many people issues engendering considerable disagreement. Chapter 15 on issues in curriculum development was a particular challenge, for the literature on any one of the fourteen issues discussed is extensive. What I have tried to do is call attention to the issues, synthesize principal positions pro and con, and direct readers to sources of additional information.

One of the difficulties any writer in the field of curriculum development faces is that the field is so broad. A primary task of the writer, as with any teacher, is to select the content to be included. Hence if I have missed your favorite person or theme, I beg your indulgence.

I would like to emphasize that this textbook, with its questions for discussion, exercises, bibliographies, references to nonprint materials, and websites, is meant to be used, not just read. Therefore, it is designed as a teaching aid for the instructor and a sourcebook for the student.

Many people have contributed to the writing and publishing of this and earlier editions. Through their insights into curriculum and instruction, teachers, administrators, and students with whom I have worked have helped to shape my thinking. I am deeply indebted not only to the reviewers, who so generously gave of their time to review the manuscripts of all editions of this book. I especially wish to thank my editor, Traci Mueller at Allyn and Bacon, for her continuing support.

As always, I welcome comments from users of the book.

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PART I

The Curriculum: Theoretical Dimensions

Curriculum and Instruction Defined

After studying this chapter you should be able to:

1. Define curriculum.
2. Define instruction.
3. Explain in what ways curriculum can be considered a discipline.
4. Create or select a model of the relationship between curriculum and instruction and describe your creation or selection.

Conceptions of Curriculum

Gaius Julius Caesar and his cohorts of the first century B.C. had no idea that the oval track upon which the Roman chariots raced would bequeath a word used almost daily by educators twenty-one centuries later. The track—the *curriculum*—has become one of the key concerns of today's schools, and its meaning has expanded from a tangible racecourse to an abstract concept.

In the world of professional education, the word *curriculum* has taken on an elusive, almost esoteric connotation. This poetic, neuter word does possess an aura of mystery. By contrast, other dimensions of the world of professional education like *administration*, *instruction*, and *supervision* are strong, action-oriented words. *Administration* is the *act* of administering; *instruction* is the *act* of instructing; and *supervision* is the *act* of supervising. But in what way is *curriculum* an act? While administrators administer, instructors instruct, and supervisors supervise, no school person *curricules*, and though we can find the use of the term *curricularist*,¹ it is only a rare *curricularist* who *curricularizes*.

The quest for a definition of curriculum has taxed many an educator. Dwayne Huebner ascribed ambiguity and a lack of precision to the term *curriculum*.² Elizabeth Vallance observed, "The curriculum field is by no means clear; as a discipline of study and as a field of practice, *curriculum* lacks clean boundaries. . . ."³ Indeed, curriculum seems at times analogous to the blind men's elephant. It is the pachyderm's trunk to some; its thick legs to others; its pterodactyl-like flopping ears to some people; its massive, rough sides to other persons; and its ropelike tail to still others.

Though it may be vehemently denied, no one has ever seen a curriculum, not a real, total, tangible, visible entity called a curriculum. The interested observer may have seen a written plan that may have been called a curriculum. Somehow the observer knows, probably by word of mouth, that in every school in which teachers are instructing students a curriculum exists. A written plan provides the observer with an additional clue to the existence of a certain something called a curriculum. But if by some bit of magic the observer could lift the roof of a school in session and examine the cross-section thereof, the curriculum would not be apparent. What the observer would immediately perceive would be many instances of teacher-pupil interaction we call *instruction*.

The search for evidence of the mysterious creation called curriculum is not unlike efforts to track down Bigfoot, the Yeti, the Almasty, Sasquatch, South Bay Bessie, Scotland's Loch Ness Monster, or Sweden's Great Lake Monster. Bigfoot, the Yeti, the Almasty, and Sasquatch have left their tracks in the mud and the snow; Bessie and Nessie have rippled the waters of their lakes; but no one has yet succeeded in producing incontrovertible photographs of these reputed creatures.

Nor has anyone ever photographed a curriculum. Shutterbugs have instead photographed pupils, teachers, and other school personnel. Perhaps if someone videotaped every instance of behavior in every classroom, corridor, office, and auxiliary room of a school every day and then investigated this record as thoroughly as military leaders analyze air reconnaissance photos, a curriculum could be discerned.

Certification and Curriculum

State certification laws compound the problem of defining curriculum because few, if any, professionals can become certified in *curriculum*. Whereas all professionals in training must take courses of one type or another called *curriculum*, there is not a certifiable field labeled *curriculum*. Professionals are certified in administration, guidance, supervision, school psychology, elementary education, and many teaching fields. But in *curriculum* per se? Not as a rule, although courses in the field of curriculum are mandated for certification in certain fields of specialization, such as administration and supervision.

Nevertheless, numbers of curriculum workers, consultants, coordinators, and even professors of curriculum can be identified. These specialists, many of whom may hold state certification in one or more fields, cannot customarily hang on the wall a certificate that shows that endorsement has been granted in a field called *curriculum*.

While a certifiable field of specialization called curriculum may be lacking, the word itself is treated as if it had tangible substance, for it can undergo a substantial variety of processes. Curriculum—or its plural, curricula or curriculums (depending on the user's penchant or abhorrence for the Latin)—is built, planned, designed, and con-

structured. It is improved, revised, and evaluated. Like photographic film and muscles, the curriculum is developed. It is also organized, structured, and restructured, and, like a wayward child, reformed. With considerable ingenuity the curriculum planner—another specialist—can mold, shape, and tailor the curriculum.

Interpretations of Curriculum

The amorphous nature of the word curriculum has given rise over the years to many interpretations. Madeleine R. Grumet labeled curriculum as a “field of utter confusion.”⁴ Depending on their philosophical beliefs, persons have conveyed these interpretations, among others:

- Curriculum is that which is taught in school.
- Curriculum is a set of subjects.
- Curriculum is content.
- Curriculum is a program of studies.
- Curriculum is a set of materials.
- Curriculum is a sequence of courses.
- Curriculum is a set of performance objectives.
- Curriculum is a course of study.
- Curriculum is everything that goes on within the school, including extra-class activities, guidance, and interpersonal relationships.
- Curriculum is that which is taught both inside and outside of school directed by the school.
- Curriculum is everything that is planned by school personnel.
- Curriculum is a series of experiences undergone by learners in school.
- Curriculum is that which an individual learner experiences as a result of schooling.

In the foregoing definitions you can see that curriculum can be conceived in a narrow way (as subjects taught) or in a broad way (as all the experiences of learners, both in school and out, directed by the school). The implications for the school to be drawn from the differing conceptions of curriculum can vary considerably. The school that accepts the definition of curriculum as a set of subjects faces a much simpler task than the school that takes upon itself responsibilities for experiences of the learner both inside and outside of school.

A variety of nuances is perceived when the professional educators define curriculum. The first definition, for example, given in Carter V. Good's *Dictionary of Education* describes curriculum as “a systematic group of courses or sequences of subjects required for graduation or certification in a field of study, for example, social studies curriculum, physical education curriculum. . . .”⁵ Let's see how a few writers on the subject define curriculum. One of the earliest writers on curriculum, Franklin Bobbitt, perceived curriculum as

. . . that *series of things which children and youth must do and experience* by way of developing abilities to do the things well that make up the affairs of adult life; and to be in all respects what adults should be.⁶