

# Curriculum Planning and Development

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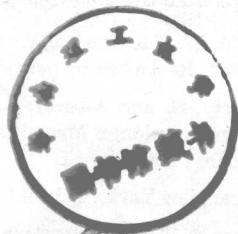
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*We dedicate this work*

*Professionally, to our teacher, colleague, and friend,  
Robert Spencer Harnack*

*Personally, to our parents,  
John and Catherine Beane  
Conrad and Ethel Toepfer  
Samuel and Jeanette Alessi*

*And to our present and futures with  
Jim, Jason, and John Beane  
Barbara Brodhagen  
Jeannie, Kathy, Mike, Julie, and Julian Michael Toepfer  
Kathy, Lisa, Claire, Geoff, and Sarah Alessi*

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# Preface

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The systematic study of curriculum is a twentieth-century phenomenon. In the past, concerns about what happened in schools were mostly limited to descriptions of what courses or subjects ought to be studied. Today we find curriculum planning and development much improved but still in the process of change and refinement.

This book adds to the growing body of literature that began over eighty years ago. It stands on the shoulders of ideas developed and reworked by thousands of students of the curriculum field. Clearly, it does not claim to invent any “new wheels.” Rather, it considers what ought to be done as well as what is done in the name of curriculum improvement. Our work here deals with consideration of fundamental, persisting ideas in the curriculum field viewed from emerging and evolving challenges facing education and society today. Our profession has often been inclined to change to new ideas largely because of their newness. For this and other reasons, many fundamental curriculum approaches have never been systematically and fully implemented. Despite their successes in beginning practice, numbers of these approaches were replaced with more recent organizational concepts.

For many years, curriculum specialists have debated Herbert Spencer’s question “What knowledge is of most worth?” Indeed, for many that query has almost come to define what the curriculum field is about. In this book we suggest focusing conceptualization of the curriculum field through the question “How much of what kind of learning is required to get where?” In other words, this book not only addresses the issue of compelling knowledge and skills, but also considers why, to what degree, and to what ends they should be learned. However, the book is also set within the context of schools that attempt to educate young people. Thus, in order to consider our question adequately, we have also described ideas about the form schools might take and how learning experiences may be planned, implemented, and evaluated.

The book follows what we believe to be a useful format for thinking through the many issues related to curriculum planning and development. The introduction raises some future concerns, and the first two chapters blend two aspects of our study. One is a look at how curriculum ideas appear in the present context of schools. The second



is an attempt to define the meaning of curriculum, curriculum planning, and other related ideas.

Chapters 3–7 explore how concepts in curriculum planning and development might be applied in schools. To clarify this issue, we suggest a broad framework that delineates the content and process of curriculum planning. Included in these chapters are discussions of the foundations of curriculum, the purposes of education, professional knowledge needed for curriculum development, organization of the school program, and design of specific curriculum plans to support teaching–learning situations.

Chapter 8 describes some of the important ideas and issues in curriculum evaluation. Chapter 9 looks at ways in which curriculum planning may be made more effective through cooperative efforts, professional growth, and organizational structures developed to respond to curriculum issues. Chapter 10 focuses on emerging issues such as school criticisms, youth issues, and modern technology as the basis for imagining what we must do in curriculum planning to make our school programs more responsive in the future.

One book can hardly explain all that is known or could be said about curriculum, and ours is no exception. Our purpose has been to describe and discuss what seem to be the most persistent issues and needs in curriculum planning and development. To do this we have explored some issues in considerable detail while treating others in a more cursory fashion. For more information about these latter topics, we encourage readers to consult the sources listed in the bibliography at the end of each chapter.

The book may prove most useful in two types of settings. One is the many courses taught each year in graduate education programs, courses that have such titles as curriculum planning, curriculum development, curriculum issues, curriculum trends, and the like. The second setting is schools themselves, where teachers and other professionals seek guidance as they work on curriculum. If present trends toward shifting responsibility for advanced teacher education from universities to schools continue, the book may also serve as a useful resource for inservice and staff development programs. Beyond these primary settings, the book might be used with upper-level undergraduate students who as prospective teachers will shortly have major responsibilities in the area of curriculum planning and development. We believe that such use of this book would help broaden their understanding of curriculum planning beyond the frequently observed narrow conceptions of a single subject or a daily lesson plan. Since curriculum planning and development are important to any educational program, the book may also prove useful to those concerned with education in the helping professions, business, public agencies, and so

on. While our focus is schools, the principles we discuss apply in other settings as well.

Finally, we have tried to write this book in an invitational tone that encourages readers to relate their own professional experiences to what we have described. In most cases, where an issue or an idea is discussed, we present various alternatives that the reader may consider in formulating a personal vision of curriculum planning and development. The activities following each chapter are designed specifically for that purpose. In the end, we believe that this approach is necessary to convey the richness and diversity of the curriculum field and to promote further inquiry into its many aspects.

### **Acknowledgments**

We are indebted to all who helped us in undertaking and completing this venture. Special thanks are gratefully extended to the following.

We wish to acknowledge the contributions of Margaret Quinlin, Jeff Johnston, and Hiram Howard for their confidence, help, and encouragement in getting this project off the ground. Particular appreciation is due to Sue Canavan, Lauren Whittaker, Kazia Navas, and Nancy Benjamin, who saw things through, showing great patience and understanding along the way.

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Any doubts about the nutritional value of pizza with double cheese should be dispelled because of its high efficiency in fueling our collaborative working sessions on the manuscript! We also wish to thank our friend Brad Frederick for his willingness to drive in any weather conditions to get this necessary sustenance for our deliberations.

Our dearest thanks go to Barb Brodhagen, Jeannie Toepfer, and Kathy Alessi for their roles as "proofreaders," "reviewers," and "camp counsellors" as work on this project progressed.

Last, and certainly not least, our warm thanks to Marilyn Stepp for her keyboarding skills and for living with the mechanics of this project.

J.A.B.  
C.F.T.  
S.J.A.

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# INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of planning, it has been said, is to bring the context of the future into the present and make decisions about that future now. As an ancient Chinese proverb states, "Even a journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." The destination of a journey becomes its objective, and a journey without a destination becomes a wandering or an unplanned search. Consider the needs of education. *To what degree are school programs planned to meet objectives? Are they truly developed as means to reach a destination or set of goals, or are they merely an unplanned search for some better ways to deal with present needs?*

This book will deal with the concepts and skills of curriculum planning that educators need to enhance the experiences of learners. School-communities that develop this capacity can better define goals that address the needs of learners and the problems of society. Through the planning process, educators can improve their skills to make curriculum plans and develop school programs that respond to those goals.

Consider the criticisms of education that characterized the first half of the 1980s. The critics identified problems, but did so largely outside of a planning context that could address their concerns. Over the years, most contemporary school programs were arrived at through reactions to critics or crises rather than through systematic curriculum planning. It is important that we recognize that the future is neither unalterable nor unavoidable. In a very real sense, the future is determined by present actions and steps taken in addressing concerns about that future.

A number of educational futures are possible. The worst possibility would be for schools and their communities simply to react to conditions without planning those reactions in terms of goals suggested by present and anticipated needs. The nature and state of education two decades from now can be planned more effectively. Typically we have tended to predict rather than plan the future of education. Educators have seldom planned actions to increase or decrease the likelihood of those predictions. It is this element of control that curriculum planning can address and support.

## THREE SCENARIOS

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- ■ As a prelude to dealing with the concepts and skills needed to improve curriculum planning of our educational futures, let us consider three possible scenarios of what education could be in the year 2005. Any of these scenarios, as well as a number of others, could largely come to pass by that time. We present the scenarios without bias or determination as to whether one would be better or worse than the others. However, the choices that schools and communities make in the coming years, and the degree to which educators develop curriculum planning skills, will largely determine what education in the year 2005 will actually be.

- **2005: The Homogenized School**

As education became a serious political issue in the 1980s, popular opinion centered around several ideas about the form and function of schools. One idea involved the belief that the schools had become too diversified in an attempt to meet the needs of youth, particularly in the affective domain and through programs dealing with the needs of handicapped learners. Many citizens questioned whether students were being sufficiently exposed to the traditional academic subjects and skills they remembered from their own years in school.

Besides feeling pressure from public criticisms, educators agreed that they were being asked to do too much for youth, including services that had previously been performed by other youth agencies. Also, additional questions were being asked about educational arrangements such as promotion policies, grouping and grading practices, elective programs, exploratory courses, and discipline procedures. These criticisms had been heard before over the years, but coupled with economic, political, and social conditions, the response by federal and state authorities was swift and dramatic.

Now in the year 2005, the suggestions of earlier educational reform movements have coalesced in a reorganized national school system. The nationally standardized curriculum mandated for all schools reflects the belief that the academic courses that all students take contain the fundamental and essential knowledge and values that they all need. The omission now of exploratory and social development courses highlights this fact. Required reading of the "great books" and memorization of historical events underscore the belief that the past is the key to the future. The prominence of mathematics and science coincides with the national priority of technological and economic advantage in the world marketplace. The school is now officially recognized as being responsible for intellectual devel-