

Philosophy of Education:

The Nature of the Curriculum

by

Tammy Mangold, MEd, CST/CFA
Director Surgical Technology, Rolla Technical Center

Introduction

To the new teacher the curriculum usually means preplanned, written subject matter the school should teach. The curriculum is often a statement of what the school authorities, state government or someone or some group outside the classroom requires the teacher to teach. A workable definition might be the following: The formal and informal content and process by which learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills, and alter attitudes, appreciations, and values under the umbrella of the school.

The formal content is the written subject matter the school should teach while the informal subject matter would be the student's reactions to different situations within the learning environment. This definition also includes what one learns (content) and how one learns (process) as well as outcomes that should be achieved. Before you plan a curriculum, you need to know what other people have done to meet the same kind of challenges in the past.

Selecting the Subject Matter

Subject matter selected for teaching should specify the objectives, establish criteria for making the selections, detail learning experiences for the student, reflect up to date technology and advances in the field. The subject matter selected should also reflect the actions of other instructors in the field.

Planning the Curriculum

Curriculum is not a lifeless pile of papers. It can be categorized into two categories: that of objective reality and that of mode and style (how you accomplish your goals). Think of your curriculum as not only a product but also a process. The

curriculum is a way of working with what has been set out to be done to accomplish outcomes. A curriculum has a life span, determined largely by its usefulness and timeliness. It is constantly being revised. The “real” curriculum (that on paper), no matter how formally and carefully planned it is alleged to be, has aspects of the unplanned. What “creeps in” as a consequence of student-teacher and student-student interaction in the classroom goes beyond the bounds of what is mandated on paper.

Master Curriculum

The master curriculum for your individual surgical technology program should be unique to your program. Its backbone should be the latest edition of the Core Curriculum for Surgical Technology as well as the Standards and Guidelines for an Accredited Educational Program in Surgical Technology. These are the Standards and Guidelines Adopted by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. The master curriculum is your guide to everything you do within your program. It sets the foundation for what you teach and how you teach it.

This curriculum is constantly being validated and updated through class discussions, course evaluations, homework and exams. Advisory counsels and the industry are excellent resources for updating the curriculum. They see the product of your curriculum first hand. All of these serve as an invaluable source to developing the master curriculum that works best for your teaching environment.

References

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