

Editorial

Curriculum Development

Curriculum refers to a series of planned activities that intend to bring about specific learning outcome to the students. The curriculum needs to define the learning outcome, the setting in which it should be performed and the standard to which it should be compared. It is the 'study tract' along which students travel during a course of study.

Curriculum needs change time to time as because

- Expectation of the society is changing
- Disease demography is changing
- Concept of teaching-learning are changing
- Newer innovative technologies of teaching-learning are available

Major issues in curriculum development

Harden RM (1986) describes the ten questions that are relevant in all situation where a course or curriculum is being planned. Those ten questions that need to be addressed include:

1. What are the needs to be met?

Physicians need to be trained up to serve the community they belong. So, community health needs will be identified and matched with the education programme to fulfil the health care demand of all the stakeholders

2. What are the aims and objectives?

The curriculum should clearly state what knowledge, skills and attitude the health service providers should achieve after completion of the course. Objectives should be –

- Specific
- Measurable
- Appropriate
- Relevant
- Timebound

3. What contents should be included?

With rapid expansion of medical science, information overload is now becoming a major problem facing medication education. Though the contents have expanded the time schedule in the curriculum has remained relatively constant. Contents need to be sorted out that contribute directly to the course objectives and will be able to develop critical thinking ability and problem-solving skills. There will be an agreed core content which has to be mastered by all students. Along with electives contents need to be incorporated. Moreover, contents should be categorized according to the level of must to know, good to know, nice to know.

4. How should the contents be organized?

Much attention needs to be paid regarding overall organization and sequence of learning within the curriculum. Sequencing of contents should be made in a specific order so that learner can make connection and correlate the knowledge and skill they have learned.

5. What educational strategies should be adopted?

Strategies are activities that are adopted to provide the best possible way to achieve the goal. There are traditional strategy as well as more innovative approaches like SPICES model and PRISM model. Choice of strategy depends on the context prevailing, aims and objectives, available resources and the experience of teachers to implement the approach.

6. What teaching methods should be used?

There are different types of teaching methods like large group teaching, small group teaching and one to one teaching. Different types of tools such as printed text, ppt slides, models,

OHP, chalk/white board, multimedia, computer, patient, simulators etc can be used. A mixture of methods and tools may be appropriate.

7. How should assessment be carried out?

Various assessment techniques like written (SAQ, SEQ, MCQ), oral (SOE), practical (OSPE, OSCE. Long case) are being practiced. It is essential that assessment matches closely the expected learning outcomes. Assessment should also depend on objectives, facilities and teachers' experience.

8. How should details of the curriculum be communicated?

Details of curriculum can be disseminated to the learners through academic calendar containing list of contents, time table of classes, exam schedule etc. Study guide containing short description of contents, teaching methods, sources of learning are also helpful ,

9. What educational environment should be fostered?

Educational environment is the overall

atmosphere where learning is taking place. Teacher, student, staffs, patients, infrastructures, logistics all belong to the environment. Environment should encourage teamwork, collaboration and creativity.

10. How should the process be managed?

Development and management of a curriculum require careful planning, strategy identification, implementation, evaluation and time to time review. A curriculum planning committee should represent all the stakeholder. Members should be allocated responsibility for proper implementation of the different aspects of curriculum. In Bangladesh, MOHFW, Deans of Universities, DGME, CME, BM&DC are working for this purpose.

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References:

1. Harden RM. Ten questions to ask when planning a course or curriculum. Medical education 1986; 20:356-365.