Faculty of Education, Queen’s University

The Design and Evaluation of Curriculum
EDUC 800 (Fall, 2005)

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Calendar description (from the School of Graduate Studies and Research)

Through this course students will explore curriculum design as an educational endeavour. This exploration will include attention to theories, processes, products and evaluation strategies that impact on both design and implementation. Students will have opportunities to apply these learnings to both school and professional-based learning environments.

Aim

To develop in students a high level of professional competence in designing and writing curriculum units.

Rationale

A curriculum is one vehicle through which learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills, and acquire or alter values. As Pratt (1994) notes, the curriculum used by a teacher “is a proposal for the explicit use of resources. The primary resource ... is people’s time, and this resource is uniquely finite” (p. 71). This course is predicated, therefore, in the belief that the teacher has a professional obligation and moral duty to use the students’ time most effectively.

The aim of the course is to help you, the teacher, become a systematic curriculum designer. To achieve this we will examine the philosophical, psychological and social contexts that shape curriculum. You will gain insight into the key concepts and skills of curriculum design. The course will offer the opportunity to clarify and develop a perspective on curriculum in which theory and practice are integrated, and to reflect on issues around how best to organize the curriculum.

The overriding purpose is to allow you to develop an informed perspective on, and facility with, curriculum design in your own contexts of practice.
Outcomes

After completing this course you will be able to:

• Discuss the historical, philosophical, psychological and sociological foundations of curriculum design
• Identify and discuss basic issues in the field of curriculum design
• Locate important sources of information on curriculum issues
• Construct a concept map for a specified subject and grade level
• Group and sequence course units into a coherent outline
• Design and write an instructional unit based on an outcomes model of curriculum planning
• Select appropriate teaching strategies, materials and resources and integrate them into a curriculum unit
• Write appropriate assessment instruments for a curriculum unit
• Critique and suggest revisions to an existing curriculum

Required reading

While you are not required to purchase a textbook for this course the following will serve as core readings:

  NB: Earlier editions are acceptable reading.


- Copies of additional readings will be distributed during classes.

- You must also be familiar with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (see bibliography). While no one (in their right mind) reads this book, it constitutes the essential reference guide for all written work, theses and projects in the M.Ed. program. It is highly recommended that you purchase a copy of this manual.
Assignments

Assignment 1. In-class assignments (no marks)
There will be a number of short in-class assignments. Since they are designed to stimulate class discussion, which in turn is designed to facilitate your growth as a curriculum designer, they will not be graded.

Assignment 2. Literature search (15%)
The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to some key education research journals that deal with issues in curriculum design. A starter list is provided after the Selected Bibliography in this outline. The assignment contains five steps:
1. Select a topic of interest to you.
2. Identify FIVE research papers that provide relevant reading.
3. Prepare a one-page report that describes the topic you have chosen. Include one or two research questions that these articles raise in your mind. On a second page list the references you have used. Make sufficient copies of both pages for the class.
4. Prepare a five-minute (maximum) presentation for the class on September 27. Your objective will be to describe your topic and share the research literature. The intent is to benefit from the advice and suggestions of peers. Following your presentation there will be time for discussion.
5. Submit the one-page report and a copy of each of the five research papers (all will be returned to you).

Assignment 3. Discussion paper (35%)
The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with the opportunity to develop expertise in one area of curriculum design. You will write a discussion paper (limit 10 pages plus references) on a topic of interest to you. The paper should contain a coherent synthesis and evaluation of important ideas and reflect your own growing understanding of the topic. You might select a topic that relates to your own professional practice or that will assist with the writing of a curriculum unit. In either case use readings of the relevant literature to identify major issues related to the topic. In order to share your growing expertise, and to provide an opportunity to benefit from feedback from peers, you will lead a 5 minute ‘work-in-progress’ session on October 11. When preparing this presentation remember all those things you know about effective teaching and learning!

Assignment 4. Curriculum unit (50%)
The purpose of this assignment is to engage you in supervised practice as you develop the skill of curriculum planning. You will design and write a curriculum unit for between 10-20 hours of instructional time in a subject area of your choice. Note that you will not attempt to design and write a course for an entire semester or year. The specific requirements of this assignment will be discussed in class.

Three general comments about the presentation and assessment of assignments:
1. As a graduate student you must adopt the conventions contained in the most recent edition of *Graduate Studies in Education: A Handbook*. This handbook is available on the Faculty of Education website (follow the links: Programs-Graduate Programs-Graduate Studies in Education: A Handbook).

2. You must be familiar with the standards contained in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* listed earlier.

3. The marking scheme for each assignment will be provided in class.

**Course grades**

The grading system for EDUC 800 follows the guidelines contained in the calendar of the *School of Graduate Studies and Research* and the most recent edition of *Graduate Studies in Education: A Handbook* (available on the Faculty of Education website).

**Summary of assignments**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Marks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1. In-class assignments</td>
<td>no marks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2. Literature search</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Assignment 3. Discussion paper</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 4. Curriculum unit</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final grade = Total</td>
<td>?/100</td>
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Selected bibliography
Note: Titles preceded by a ☑ are on 24-hour (with the possibility of 7-day) reserve in the education library.


**A sampling of journals** (available in the education library)

- Alberta Journal of Educational Research
- American Journal of Education
- Cambridge Journal of Education
- Curriculum Inquiry
- Curriculum Journal
- Curriculum Perspectives
- Educational Leadership
- Educational Researcher
- Gifted Child Quarterly
- Harvard Educational Review
- Journal of Curriculum and Supervision
- Journal of Curriculum Studies
- Journal of Curriculum Theorizing
- Oxford Review of Education
- Phi Delta Kappan
- Review of Educational Research