



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
CENTRE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Graduate Teaching Week:
Curriculum Planning and Course Design
Workshop**

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Workshop Objective

- To provide an awareness of some major concepts to consider in the designing a course.



Workshop Learning Outcomes

- Participants will develop a clearer understanding of what curriculum entails
- Participants will be able to identify the different components that go into designing a course that goes beyond a focus on content
- Participants will come to know a number of strategies for actively engaging students in their learning.

What is 'curriculum'?

Activity: Think, Pair, Share

- Take a moment to jot down a few things that come to mind when you see/hear the word 'curriculum.'
- Turn to the person on your right and share your ideas.
- **Debrief:** What did you notice during your conversation?

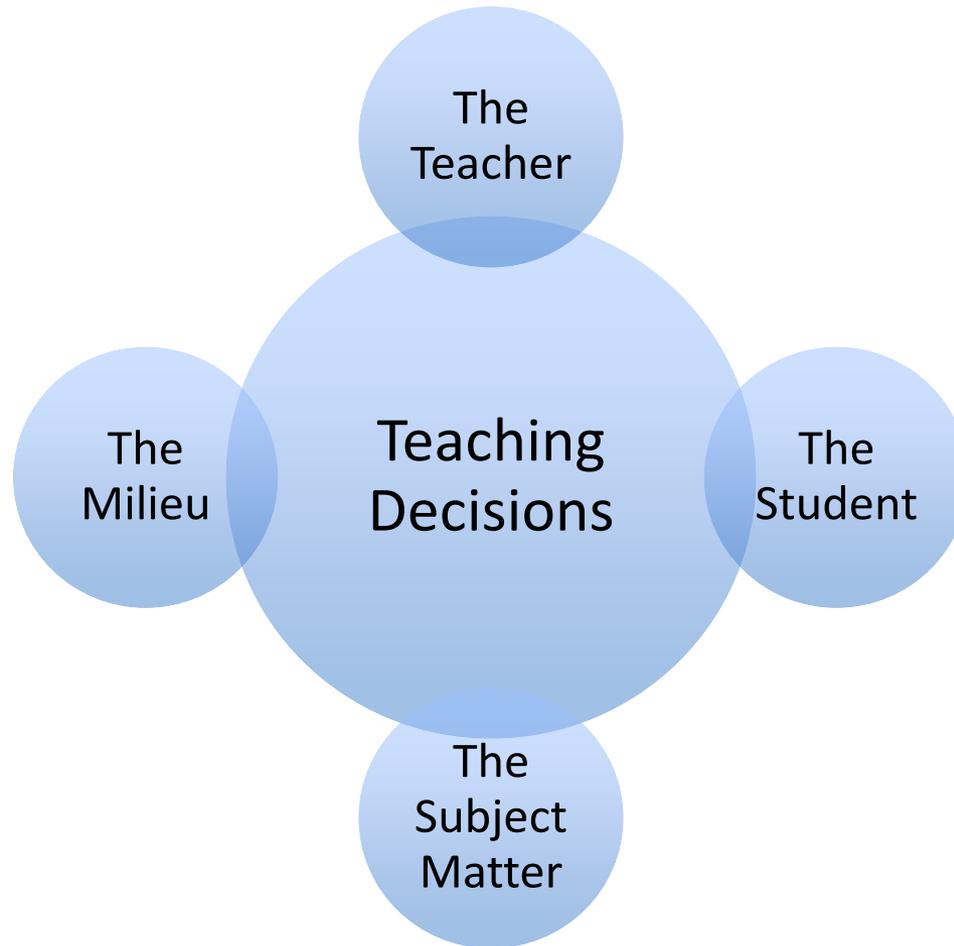
Defining Curriculum

Multiple ways of viewing curriculum – “messy” (Grumet, 1988) and “complicated” (Pinar, 2011)

- Curriculum is the permanent subjects that embody essential knowledge (Marsh, 2009).
- Curriculum is an educational plan that spells out which goals and objectives should be achieved, which topics should be covered, and which methods are to be used for learning, teaching and evaluation (Wojtczak, 2002).
- Curriculum is the questioning of authority and the searching for complex views of human situations (Reynolds & Weber, 2004 in Marsh, 2009).
- Curriculum is culture--a revealing system of implicit and explicit beliefs, values, behaviors, and customs in classrooms and schools which are deliberated within communities and other public spheres (Bolotin Joseph, 2010, x).
- Curriculum is an ongoing social process comprised of the interactions of students, teachers, knowledge and milieu (Cornbleth, 1990, 5).
- Curriculum is a point of departure rather than a destination (Chambers, 2003, 239).
- Curriculum is the totality of learning experiences (Marsh & Willis, 2003).

Do you see your ideas mirrored in any of these definitions?

Schwab's Curriculum Commonplaces



Adapted from Schwab, J. J. (1973). The practical 3: Translation into curriculum. *The School Review* 81, (4), 501-522.

Why Curriculum Commonplaces?

“The commonplaces are a set of factors or determinants that occur in statements about the aims, content and methods of curriculum... They are commonplace in the usual sense of the word i.e. they appear and reappear in curricular statements. We cannot escape them. An adequate curriculum statement must say something about each of them” (p. 84)

[Connelly, M. & Clandinin, J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners*. Toronto, ON: OISE Teachers College Press.]

The Teacher Commonplace

- *What do you as the teacher bring to the educational experience?*
- What is your ‘frame of interpretation’?

Activity: One minute conversations to examine your views and assumptions

- *What sort of knowledge and skills should universities provide?*
- *What do you believe is the best way for students to learn that important content?*
- *What are your roles and responsibilities as an instructor in that learning?*
- *What are the students’ roles and responsibilities for their learning?*

How might your responses influence **how** you will teach (instructional strategies used)?

Approaches to Teaching

Teacher directed -- Shared Direction-- Student Directed



Engaging in Reflective Practice

- "Whoever our students may be, whatever the subject we teach, ultimately we teach who we are" (Palmer, 1999, p. 1).
- "Teachers need to become learners of themselves and start to ask questions of themselves" (Kanu & Glor, 2006, p. 110).
- Who are you as a teacher?
 - Teaching Style Inventories
 - <http://members.shaw.ca/mdde615/tchstylsquiz7.htm>
 - <http://www.teachingperspectives.com/drupal/>

The Student/Learner Commonplace

- *Who are your students and what do they bring to the educational experience?*
- What knowledge/skills are you assuming are already in place?

Activity: While you are watching this video think about the above questions.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGCJ46vyR9o>

How might this information affect your course planning?

The Milieu/Context Commonplace

- *How does the context in which the teaching takes place affect learning?*

Activity: Interview a partner using these questions

- Think back to the video. What did it bring to your attention about the role of context in teaching?
- What factors will you need to consider regarding the place from which you teach? [i.e. How would a classroom set up like this one affect *how* you teach]?
- What other external factors might influence your teaching?
- How might this information influence your course design?

The Subject Matter Commonplace

- What should be learned? How do you decide what to teach?

“The curriculum of a subject should be determined by the most fundamental understanding that can be achieved of the underlying principles that give structure to a subject. Teaching specific topics or skills without making clear their context in the broader fundamental structure of a field of knowledge is uneconomical ...An understanding of fundamental principles and ideas appears to be the main road to adequate transfer to training. To understand something as a specific instance of a more general case – which is what understanding a more fundamental structure means – is to have learned not only a specific thing but also a model for understanding other things like it that one may encounter” (p. 15).

[Donovan, S. & Bransford, J. (Eds.) (2005). *How students learn*. Washington, DC: The National Academics Press]

Selecting Content

Reflecting on your subject area: How will you decide what to teach?

Take a moment to make a few jot notes in response to these questions.

- What content is essential and why?
- What are the basic concepts and principles of your subject?
- What topics are central?
- What exactly should students understand about these topics/concepts?
- How is the subject matter best organized for teaching and learning?

Discuss in your group.

What else should be considered when selecting content?

- Have a look at “Employability Skills 2000+” from the Conference Board of Canada

<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills>

Activity: Heads Together

Think back to your list of the important content for your course. Have you addressed any of these essential skills?

How might this information influence your course design?

The Hidden Curriculum

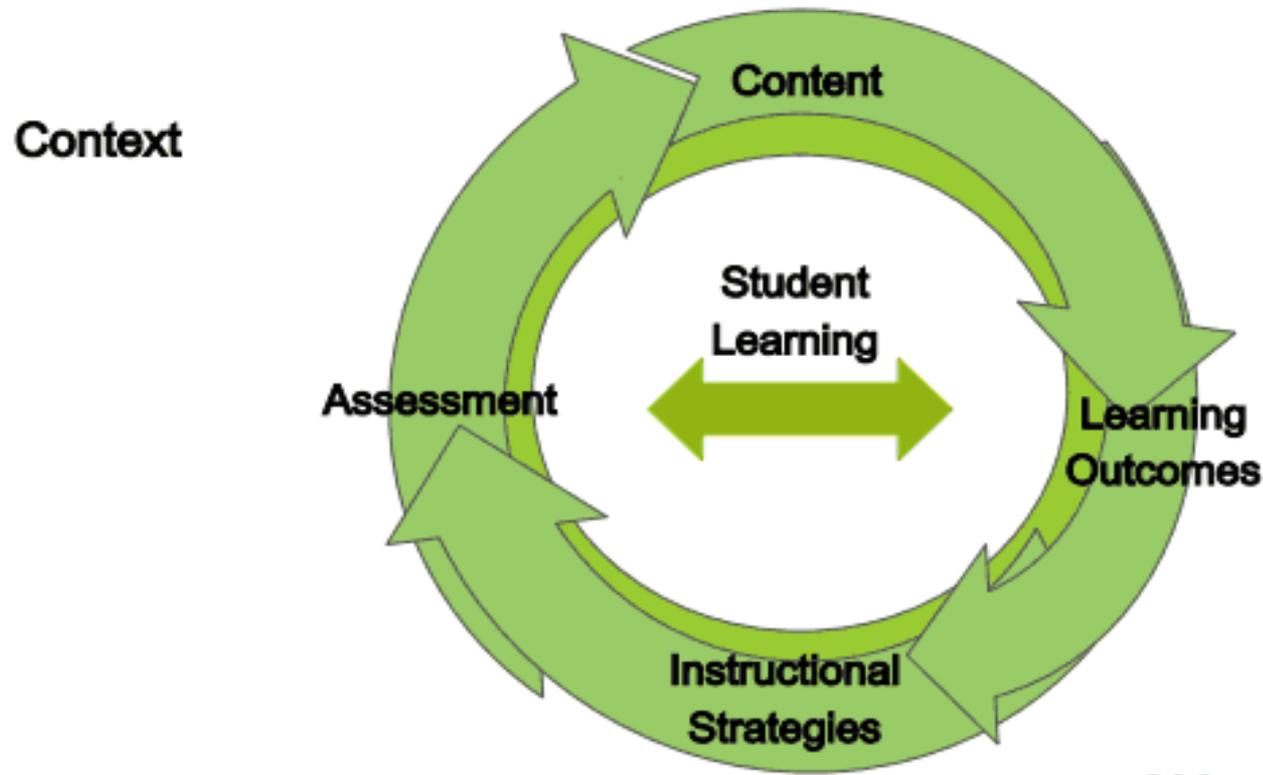
“A curriculum is determined as much by what is not offered, and what has been rejected, as it is by positive actions. And very importantly the curriculum that actually happens – that is what is realised in practice – includes informal contact between teachers and learners as well as between the learners themselves, and this has been termed ‘the hidden curriculum’ which often has as much influence on what is learnt as the formal curriculum that is written down as a set of intentions. And it includes what you decide to do on the spur of the moment. So in fact it is useful to think of there being three faces to a curriculum: the curriculum on paper; the curriculum in action; and the curriculum that participants actually learn” (Coles, 2003).

What implications does this quote have for course design?

The Importance of Front End Analysis

- Builds a foundation that influences course design decisions
- Demonstrates how all aspects of the design process are linked and influence one other.
- Helps to shift your attention to address and match the needs of those you are teaching.
- Focuses your attention on student learning rather than presenting content.

Framework for course design



see
Saroyan & Amundsen, 2004

Course Design Planner

STEP 1: How do you decide what content to teach and how to organize it?

Using graphic organizers such as concept maps

<http://www.schrockguide.net/concept-mapping.html>

STEP 2: What learning outcomes will need to be addressed?

In the end what do you want your students to know, value and be able to do in relation to the course content?

i) General Outcome (s)

ii) Specific Outcomes

- *Skills/Processes*
- *Knowledge/Understanding*
- *Attitudes*

STEP 3: How will you know if you have addressed these learning outcomes?

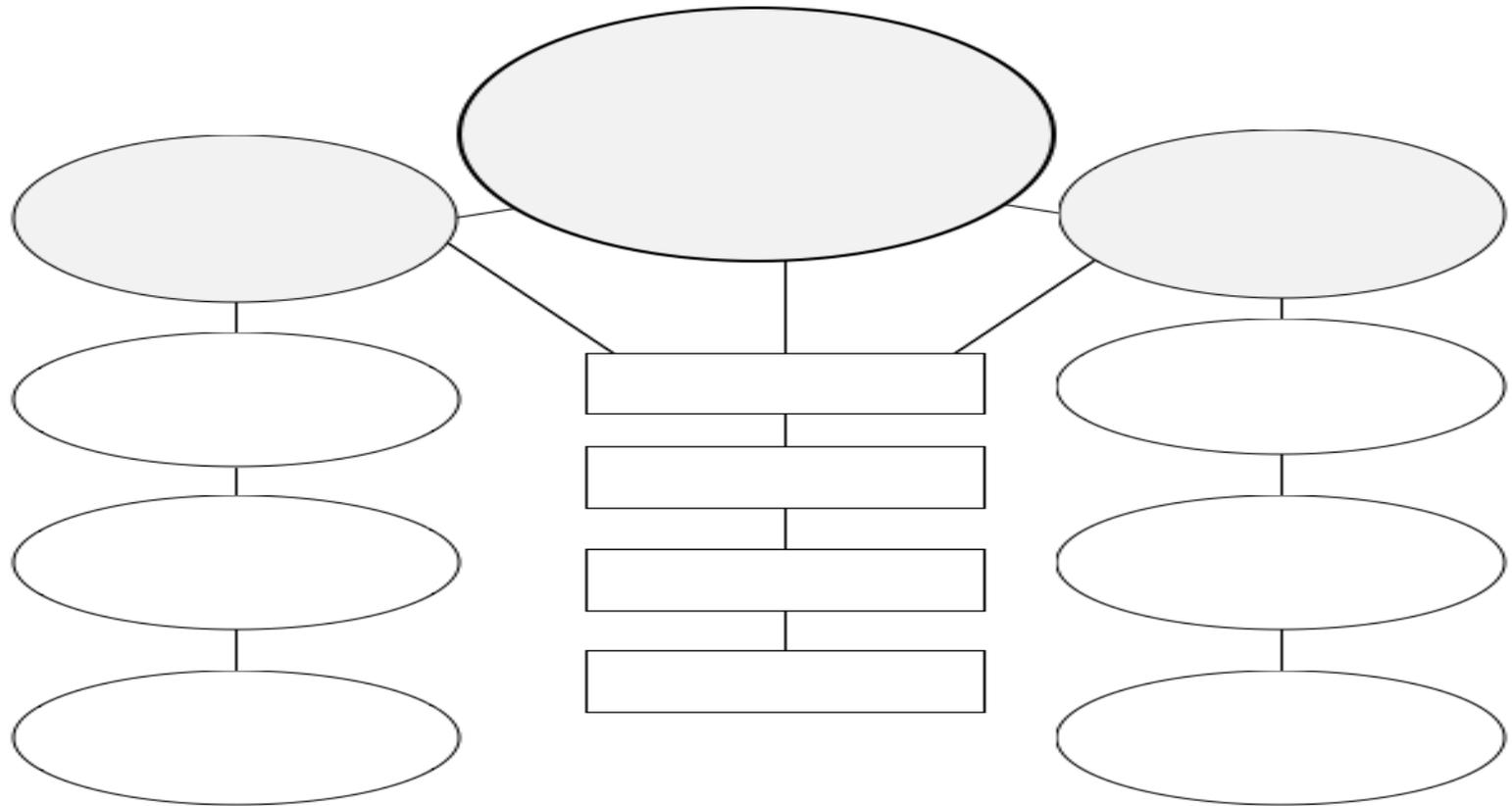
What assessment strategies will you use?

STEP 4: What strategies/learning activities will help you to teach the content in a way that helps students to address the outcomes?

STEP 5: What resources will you use to teach the selected content?

Adapted from: "Cluster Map", Purposeful Planning, **InPraxis**, Group Inc., 2005

Outcomes Cluster Map



Reflection: Looking Back

Activity: What? So what? Now what?

- What do you think I believe about learning and my roles in that learning versus the students' roles? What strategies did I use to demonstrate my philosophy in action?
- What is one key thought or piece of advice you will keep in mind to guide your course planning in the future?
- What question about course planning remains for you to ponder?

Next Steps

- Recommended Books:

Galbraith, M. (Ed.)(2004). *Adult learning methods: A guide for effective instruction*. Malabar, FA: Krieger Pub. Co.

Saroyan, A., & Amundsen, C. (2004). *Rethinking teaching in higher education: From a course design workshop to a faculty development framework*. Stylus Pub.

- Talk to someone who has already taught
- Attend sessions at CTL – TLS Concepts and Course Design series [<http://wwwctl.ualberta.ca>]
- Request a one-on-one course consultation at CTL

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