PREFACE

For over 40 years this text has served to guide education leaders in translating curriculum theory into practice. With each new edition, there are major changes in professional education, and these changes influence how the practice of curriculum development is conducted. In previous editions, topics such as diversity, standards, technology, and international influences have been featured. In this 9th edition, the Common Core State Standards and curriculum assessment are two dominant themes. Standards and assessment reflect our nation’s effort to keep our schools relevant in a new age of a global economy.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

- In-depth analysis of the role of curriculum work in the new global era.
- Detailed treatment of the Common Core movement and its meaning.
- Greater exploration of curriculum assessment.
- Updates on the emerging role of technology in learning.
- Discussion of how the school curriculum is responding to immigrant populations.
- Reviews of changes in language, multicultural, and special education instruction.
- New programs and issues for the various levels of schooling.
- New bibliographies and resources in each chapter.

This edition of Curriculum Development: A Guide to Practice differs from previous editions in several significant ways. There is, in this edition, an attempt to help the reader understand school curriculum as a very critical function in both our formal education system and in the development of our nation. As we develop curriculum programs for students in our schools, we also program our country’s readiness for the future. All nations, regardless of their stage of development, are busy modifying their school curriculum in order to adjust to a new and interdependent world economy. Those nations most effective in accurately anticipating the future, and designing school programs that will serve their students well in that future, will prosper. Those nations unable to re-design their curriculums for this new age will flounder or fail. Curriculum is that important!

The Common Core State Standards initiative in the United States is this nation’s response to these world-wide changes. This major activity in 46 states, and thousands of communities, represents the single most ambitious change in the history of American education. If successful, the curriculum derived from the Common Core Standards will prepare American students for both future work and further schooling. If the Common Core stalls, or does not meet the expectations of the participating states, the education being planned for our students may well be irrelevant and maybe even dysfunctional. Curriculum leaders, at all levels, will play an important role in the eventual outcome of this effort and these challenging steps.

The author hopes that this edition provides the reader with new knowledge about our society, the students who attend our schools, our new learning approaches, and the impact of new communication technologies on the delivery of the curriculum. Using
this knowledge and these tools, our future curriculum workers can begin to prepare to assume the responsibility of curriculum leadership.

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Jon Wiles
Curriculum Development in a Global Age

Learning Outcome
- To gain a social and historical perspective of the curriculum development role.

Curriculum is a century-old area of professional study within the field of education. For those persons not in professional education, the term curriculum is usually associated with a physical document such as a textbook, syllabus, teacher’s guide, or learning package. For professional educators, however, the word is usually more broadly defined. The term may refer to a set of plans, intentions, activities, or outcomes that are delivered in a variety of ways and in different settings. Above all else, curriculum leaders are always concerned with the value or purpose of the curriculum, with the philosophy of the effort. A clarification of the purpose of a curriculum is prerequisite to every sound curriculum development effort. The element of choice is found in every curriculum decision, anywhere in the world, and these choices reflect both national and local priorities and values.

Most curriculum work in school settings is mechanical, concerning itself with updating and renewal of existing material. For instance, throughout much of the 20th century, curriculum work addressed the formatting of subject matter and the methodologies of delivering that content. Through a sort of layering process, new knowledge was added to old knowledge, and new programs were appended to older programs. Many methods and media have come and gone during that period. Such an orderly and predictable process depended on a general agreement about the purpose of education. In the 21st century, such an agreement is no longer fully present. Throughout the world, education is being redefined by many forces, but especially by globalization, interdependence, and the new technologies that can deliver learning directly to the individual.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the general conception of education was uniformly a process of becoming knowledgeable. Less than two decades into that century, however, there were conflicting views of what constituted a formal education and what role schools might play in the process. There were also early differences of opinion about how the act of learning occurred. The field of curriculum was born in the
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United States with Franklin Bobbitt’s small book simply entitled *Curriculum* (1918), and the field quickly became an area of professional study that assessed and sorted out educational choices and procedures. As the options for defining what might constitute an education multiplied, the field of curriculum expanded to address the development of entire educational programs, their processes, and their meaning to societies.

Curriculum development is a process whereby the choices of designing a learning experience for clients (students) are made and then activated through a series of coordinated activities. For a curriculum specialist, development is a logical process that begins with a clear set of goals and proceeds in an if-then manner until finished. In other words, the process of curriculum development is deductive in nature, resulting in finer and finer actions to accomplish the intended purpose of that curriculum. The development process usually begins with a set of questions that initially reveals value preferences and later supports planning efforts, program development, and evaluation. When these value preferences are formalized, we refer to them as *philosophies* or *learning theories*. These preliminary statements can establish boundaries of concern, screen subobjectives, and assist in assessing the efficacy of the programs when they are developed. Through a process of deduction, broad statements become goals, objectives, standards, learning outcomes, and eventually classroom-level lesson plans.

A useful way to think about curriculum and the development process is to use the model of architecture. An architect cannot design a home until some information is provided about style preferences. This style is analogous to a philosophy in education. Once the architect knows the style, be it ranch, colonial, or modern, he or she can then proceed to the more detailed functions (rooms, layout, decor, and so forth). Without clarification, the possibilities for error in design are great. Likewise, the curriculum developer cannot easily develop a program of study without knowing why the program exists. The historical practice of layering on new curricula on top of existing or old curricula has resulted in conceptual confusion in many educational institutions. The absence of such preliminary clarification also explains why so much change in education is not lasting.

The field of curriculum, then, is a subset of professional education that asks questions, provides information, and steers the process of design and development. Curriculum is also the foundation for any subsequent evaluation. Over the years, five uncomplicated elements have become accepted as a regular part of the structure of curriculum work:

1. **Seeing curriculum development as a cycle or a system** Ralph Tyler, a powerful U.S. curriculum leader in the first half of the 20th century, is credited with framing questions that led to a cyclical model of development that begins with an analysis, proceeds to a design stage, undergoes implementation, and then is evaluated for effectiveness. This evaluation leads to new analysis. In more recent times, this logical progression has been presented as a self-refining system.

2. **Regular foundational areas of concern** Curriculum workers generally look to four key areas in developing programs, known as the bases or foundations of curriculum. These foundational areas are social forces (the society), knowledge, human development, and learning. Each of these will be addressed in some detail in this chapter. To these four traditional areas of concern, the author nominates a fifth area—technology—for reasons to be discussed.
3. **Use of data in decision making**  
Research has become a major part of curriculum work. Curriculum developers have increasingly relied on needs assessments and evaluative data in planning programs. This emphasis reflects the growing awareness that any curriculum should produce some kind of measurable result. Curriculum assessment is vital.

4. **Involving others in the planning process**  
In the latter half of the 20th century, curriculum leaders relied on change theory to guide the implementation of new programs. Such theory suggested that involving those affected by curriculum change in the planning process increased the odds of successful development.

5. **Assessing results**  
Particularly in the 21st century, educators have incorporated assessment into the planning process to ensure a degree of standardization in outcomes.

**DEFINING CURRICULUM**

We can understand a lot about what curriculum is, and what it is not, by its semantics. People in the field of curriculum spend a lot of energy arguing about the definition of this term. The word *curriculum* has been in existence since about 1820, and it comes from the Latin word *currere*, which means “to run” or “to run the course.” With time, the traditional definition of school curriculum came to mean traversing the course of study.

While most noneducators think of curriculum and curriculum development in terms of this traditional definition, equating the word *curriculum* with a course of study or a text to be completed, most curriculum leaders have a more expansive definition. There are, however, some highly traditional educators who continue to define curriculum this way even today. To do so requires a very narrow definition of education:

The curriculum should consist of permanent studies—the rules of grammar, reading, rhetoric and logic, and mathematics (for the elementary and secondary school), and the greatest books of the western world (beginning at the secondary level of schooling). (Hutchins, 1936, p. 82)

The curriculum must consist essentially of disciplined study in five great areas: (1) command of mother tongue and the systematic study of grammar, literature, and writing, (2) mathematics, (3) sciences, (4) history, (5) foreign languages. (Bestor, 1956, pp. 48–49)

The curriculum should consist entirely of knowledge that comes from the disciplines. Education should be conceived as a guided recapitulation of the process of inquiry that gave rise to the fruitful bodies of organized knowledge comprising the established disciplines. (Phenix, 1962, p. 64)

The curriculum is such permanent subjects as grammar, reading, logic, rhetoric, mathematics, and the greatest books of the western world that embody essential knowledge. (Marsh & Willis, 1995, p. 13)

The curriculum is a systematic group of courses or sequence of subjects required for graduation or certification in a major field of study. (Oliva, 2012, p. 18)

The definition of “curriculum” as a product, or as a completely contained experience, has proved highly unsatisfactory to most educators involved in the development of
learning programs. Very early in the 20th century, for example, the enormous growth in accessible knowledge meant that “knowing” could no longer be contained in books or in document form only. With the dissemination of knowledge through new technical media such as the radio, identifying what constituted essential knowledge became more difficult.

In addition, the composition of the school population in the United States changed considerably in this same period. The population of the secondary school in the United States grew from only 200,000 students in the 1890s to nearly 5 million students by 1924. Schooling was no longer the preserve of a small elite who would attend college; it was now a universal experience. In some cases, acquiring citizenship skills and language took precedence over acquiring classical knowledge, and new courses (social studies, language arts, vocational education, physical education) had to be devised for learners.

As new courses were added to the curriculum and the differences among individual learners became more obvious to teachers and administrators, the definition of the curriculum began to stretch. Specialists in the field began to differentiate among various kinds of curricula: planned and unplanned (the hidden curriculum), technical learning, and practical learning. Bobbitt (1924), for example, observed:

The curriculum may be defined in two ways: (1) it is the range of experiences, both indirect and direct, concerned in unfolding the abilities of the individual, or (2) it is a series of consciously directed training experiences that the schools use for completing and perfecting the individual. (p. 10)

Expanding on this theme, Hollis Caswell and Doak Campbell (1935) wrote of the socializing function of the schooling experience. The curriculum, they said, “is composed of all of the experiences children have under the guidance of the school” (p. 66). Other writers continued this theme of seeing curriculum as an experience (process) rather than as a product, for example:

A sequence of potential experiences is developed by the school for the purpose of disciplining children and youth in-group ways of thinking and acting. This set of experiences is referred to as the curriculum. (Smith, Stanley, & Shores, 1957, p. 3)

The curriculum is now generally considered to be all of the experiences that learners have under the auspices of the school. (R. Doll, 1970, p. 9)

Curriculum is all of the experiences that individual learners have in a program of education whose purpose is to achieve broad goals and related specific objectives, which is planned in terms of a framework of theory and research or past or present professional practices. (Tyler, 1957, p. 79)

By the mid-1950s, it had become increasingly evident that schools had a tremendous influence on students’ lives. Some of those influences were structured; others were due to the congregation of youth. It was recognized that students also had experiences at school (the hidden curriculum) not planned by the school. During this period, definitions of curriculum were dominated by those aspects of the curriculum that were planned, rather than simply the content or general experiences of students:

The curriculum is all of the learning of students, which is planned by and directed by the school to attain its educational goals. (Taba, 1962, p. 11)
A curriculum is a plan for learning. (Saylor & Alexander, 1974, p. 6)

We define curriculum as a plan for providing sets of learning opportunities to achieve broad goals and related specific objectives for an identifiable population served by a single school center. (Johnson, 1970/1971, p. 25)

A curriculum [is] usually thought of as a course of study or plan for what is to be taught in an educational institution. (McNeil, 2008, p. 12)

For nearly 50 years there has been concern about the performance of educational programs. This focus, often referred to as accountability, outcome-based education, or standards-based learning, has pushed the definition of the curriculum toward an emphasis on ends or results:

Curriculum is concerned not with what students will do in the learning situation, but with what they will learn as a consequence of what they do. Curriculum is concerned with results. (D. Tanner & L. Tanner, 1995, p. 67)

[Curriculum is] the planned and guided learning experiences and intended outcomes, formulated through systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience, under the auspices of the school, for the learners’ continuous and willful growth in personal-social competence. (D. Tanner & L. Tanner, 1995, preface)

In the mid-1990s, the concept of an evolving and unplanned set of experiences for children emerged under the label postmodern:

A new sense of educational order will emerge, as well as new relations between teachers and students, culminating in a new concept of curriculum. The linear, sequential, easily quantifiable ordering system dominating education today could give way to a more complex, pluralistic, unpredictable system or network. Such a complex network will, like life itself, always be in transition, in process. (W. Doll, 1993, p. 3)

In closed societies, the elite’s values are superimposed on the people. Education, as a practice of freedom, rejects the notion that knowledge is extended or transferred to students as if they were objects. (Freire, 1973, p. 96)

As we move into the 21st Century, we find ourselves no longer constrained by modernist images of purpose and history. Elements of discontinuity, rapture, and difference (chaos) provide alternative sets of referents by which to understand modernity as well as to challenge and modify it. The term post-modern is a rejection of grand narratives and any form of totalizing thought. It embraces diversity and locality. It creates a world where individuals must make their way, where knowledge is consistently changing, and where meaning is no longer anchored in history. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. ii)

Your author sees the curriculum as a desired goal or set of values that can be activated through a development process, culminating in experiences for learners. The degree to which those experiences represent the envisioned goal or goals is a direct function of the effectiveness of the curriculum development efforts. The purpose of any such design is, necessarily, the prerogative of the group engaged in such development.
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The importance of these various definitions of the term curriculum is that they structure the boundaries of responsibility used by school planners. Narrow definitions, such as subject-matter mastery, are quite different from broad definitions, such as all of the experiences at school, and would project very different schooling designs.

Although the definition of curriculum has changed in response to social forces and expectations for the school, the process of curriculum development has remained fairly constant over time. Through analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation, curriculum developers set goals, plan experiences, select content, and assess outcomes of school programs. These constant processes have contributed to the emergence of a predictable structure in curriculum planning.

STRUCTURE AND PRINCIPLES IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Although definitions of curriculum and visions for the purpose of education were expansive during the entire 20th century, the structure of curriculum development remained primarily a filling-in activity. Major principles in the field of curriculum evolved more from practice than from any logic or enlightenment. As a result, the theory of curriculum has remained narrow and has followed practices found in all school environments. There are few global principles to guide leaders. As Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner (1995) noted:

In the absence of a holistic conception of curriculum, the focus is on piece-meal and mechanical functions. The main thrust in curriculum development and reform over the years has been directed at microcurricular problems to the neglect of macrocurricular problems. (p. 68)

Principles of curriculum have evolved as core procedures (rather than as theoretical guidelines) as a result of the absence of systematic thinking about curriculum planning; the vulnerability of curriculum planning to social, political, technical, and economic forces; and the constantly changing priorities of education in the United States and abroad. Thus, identification of curricular principles is difficult. Hilda Taba (1962) described the almost unmanageable condition of curriculum approaches in this way:

Decisions leading to change in curriculum organization have been made largely by pressure, by hunches, or in terms of expediency instead of being based on clear-cut theoretical considerations or tested knowledge. The scope of curriculum has been extended vastly without an adequate consideration of the consequence of this extension on sequence or cumulative learning. . . . The fact that these perplexities underlying curriculum change have not been studied adequately may account for the proliferation of approaches to curriculum making. (p. 9)

Prior to the major curriculum reforms in the late 1950s and early 1960s, most curriculum development in school settings was oriented toward producing content packages. In developing courses of study, curriculum specialists sought to refine school programs by redesigning essential topic areas and updating older programs on a scheduled basis. This rather static role for curriculum practitioners in the field resulted in the
evolution of both theoretical constructs for developing curriculum and operational procedures that have changed little over time.

An early observation by John Dewey (1902) that “the fundamental factors in the educational process are (1) the learner, (2) the society, and (3) organized subject matter” (p. 4) set the stage for defining curriculum parameters. These themes were echoed by Dewey’s former student, Harold Rugg, who wrote: “There are, indeed, three critical factors in the educational process: the child, contemporary American society, and standing between them, the school” (Rugg, 1926). Another student of Dewey’s, Boyd Bode, renewed this theme of three parts in 1931 when he observed: “The difference in curriculum stems from three points of view: (1) the standpoint of the subject matter specialists, (2) the standpoint of the practical man, and (3) the interests of the learner” (pp. 543–544).

By 1945, these three general concerns were finding acceptance in most curriculum literature. Taba, for instance, discussed the three sources of data in curriculum planning as (1) the study of society, (2) studies of learners, and (3) studies of subject matter content (p. 58). By the early 1960s, Taba had further refined the study of society to mean “cultural demands—a reflection of the changing social milieu of the school” (1962). Gaining acceptance as a fourth important planning base for curriculum in the mid-1950s and early 1960s was the study of learning itself. Studies from various schools of psychology and the advent of sophisticated technology in school settings raised new possibilities and choices for educators who were planning programs. These four major areas of concern for curriculum planners, known as the foundations, or bases, of planning, remain the subject of most analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation in school programs today. These vital areas of concern are addressed later in this chapter.

The importance of these planning bases as organizers for thinking about the development of educational programs is best summarized by Taba (1962), a curriculum specialist concerned with the development aspects of curriculum:

Semantics aside, these variations in the conception of the function of education are not idle or theoretical arguments. They have definite concrete implications for the shape of educational programs, especially the curriculum. . . . If one believes that the chief function of education is to transmit the perennial truths, one cannot but strive toward a uniform curriculum and teaching. Efforts to develop thinking take a different shape depending on whether the major function of education is seen as fostering creative thinking and problem solving or as following the rational forms of thinking established in our classical tradition. As such, differences in these concepts naturally determine what are considered the “essentials” and what are the “dispensable frills” in education. (p. 30)

Paralleling this conceptual mapping of curriculum concerns was the evolution of some early operational procedures. Early curriculum development focused on subject content that was mechanical and that contained rather simple operational techniques developed in the 1920s. These procedures continued as the dominant operational concern until the early 1960s. Writing in the 1926 yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Harold Rugg outlined the operational tasks of curriculum development as a three-step process: (1) determine the fundamental objectives, (2) select
activities and other materials of instruction, and (3) discover the most effective organization and placement of this instruction (p. 22).

By 1950, the technique of “inventory, organize, and present” had reached refinement in Ralph Tyler’s widely read four-step analysis:

1. What educational purposes shall the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain those purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (p. 7)

By addressing the assessment of curriculum development, Tyler introduced the concept of the curriculum development cycle whereby evaluation led to a reconsideration of purpose. Such a cycle in schools illuminated the comprehensiveness of the planning activity and later gave birth to refinements such as systems analysis and taxonomies of learning. Tyler’s four-step model also rekindled a 50-year-old effort to develop manageable behavioral objectives in education (Mager, 1972; Covey, 1989; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The ordering of the development procedure also encouraged a more mechanistic approach to curriculum development. Such approaches, long practiced in schools, are thoroughly represented in curriculum literature through various and common definitions:

Curriculum development . . . is basically a plan of structuring the environment to coordinate in an orderly manner the elements of time, space, materials, equipment and personnel. (Feyereisen, Fiorino, & Nowak, 1970, p. 204)

The function of curriculum development is to research, design, and engineer the working relationships of the curricular elements that will be employed during the instructional phase in order to achieve desired outcomes. (Hauenstein, 1975, p. 6)

One of the most highly refined versions of Tyler’s procedure for developing school curriculum was outlined in 1962 by his former student Hilda Taba. Seven major steps of curriculum development were identified:

1. Diagnosis of needs
2. Formulation of objectives
3. Selection of content
4. Organization of content
5. Selection of learning experiences
6. Organization of learning experiences
7. Determination of what to evaluate and means of doing it (p. 12)

Within each step, Taba provided substeps that identified criteria for action. For example, in the selection of learning experiences, it is important that the curriculum developer consider the following:

1. Validity and significance of content
2. Consistency with social reality
3. Balance of breadth and depth of experiences
4. Provision for a wide range of objectives
5. Learnability–adaptability of the experience to the life of the student
6. Appropriateness to needs and interests of learners

More modern lists of these steps differ from Taba’s because they present curriculum as a more comprehensive process, which may or may not be tied to only a content product. In the following example, for instance, Feyereisen et al. (1970) present curriculum development as a problem-solving action chain:

1. Identification of the problem
2. Diagnosis of the problem
3. Search for alternative solutions
4. Selection of the best solution
5. Ratification of the solution by the organization
6. Authorization of the solution
7. Use of the solution on a trial basis
8. Preparation for adoption of the solution
9. Adoption of the solution
10. Direction and guidance of staff
11. Evaluation of effectiveness (p. 61)

The broader focus of the Feyereisen description reflects a growing interest in curriculum development with planning for change in school environments from a macro-perspective. Curriculum development is increasingly a process with systemic concerns.

Other examples of the basic structure of the curriculum cycle could be provided at this point, but it should be clear to the reader that a regular planning and review process developed and was widely practiced in U.S. schools between 1920 and 1960. This process reflected the historical dominance of subject matter content as the focus of curriculum and any subsequent renewal:

Certainly, a review of the plans made and implemented today and yesterday leaves no doubt that the dominant assumption of past curriculum planning has been the goal of subject matter mastery through a subject curriculum, almost inextricably tied to a closed school and graded school ladder, to a marking system that rewards successful achievement of fixed content and penalizes unsuccessful achievement, to an instructional organization based on fixed classes in the subjects and a timetable for them. (Alexander, 1974, p. 10)

Progress in the so-called substantive dimension of curriculum development continues today. Since the early 1980s, curriculum specialists have employed systems thinking in school planning and in developing standardized learning materials. Such comprehensive planning efforts have allowed curriculum leaders to engineer program improvement in new and efficient ways. Curricula for specific skill development, such as reading and math, have been much improved under approaches such as Common Core, a national curriculum development effort. The process of curriculum development, from the inception of an idea to the final assessment of the reconstruction effort, has become a highly skilled and detailed area of curriculum leadership in the 21st century.
In sharp contrast, the visionary or theoretical dimension of curriculum work has progressed little in the past century. Despite an increased knowledge base, growing understanding of human development, sophistication in the use of technology, and an emerging focus on teaching and learning, curriculum models remain primitive and highly unimaginative. If Rip Van Winkle were to wake up after a long sleep, he would at least recognize schools anywhere in the world. Theoretical dimensions of curriculum development remain suppressed by a dependence on economic sponsorship, political conservatism, and the failure of educators to gain consensus for any significant change in the schooling process. There are signs, however, that many groups wish to challenge school leaders on the subject of purpose.

The introduction of the new interactive technologies in schools, using the Internet and other wireless technologies, are making much of the existing condition irrelevant. Curriculum developers will be hard pressed to even catalog, let alone control, select, and order, all of the new information available to learners. Real-time delivery, anywhere delivery, and nonlinear delivery of information to the learner via the Internet does not fit easily into the historical curriculum construct of knowledge mastery. New paradigms and new models will be needed if the process of curriculum development in schools is to survive the rush of the technological age.

HISTORY AND CURRICULUM: THREE ERAS

A sense of history is very important for anyone working in curriculum. Without an understanding of history, many contemporary curriculum practices would seem odd or even illogical. A historical perspective also helps curriculum leaders focus on the long-term goals of education rather than on the events and programs of the moment. In the United States, for example, the development of education can be viewed in terms of three distinct eras: the evolutionary era, the modern era, and the postmodern era. The first era describes U.S. education as it evolved into a unique form. The second era reflects a more scientific period of the 20th century, fitting education to the populace. The third era, beginning in the last years of the 20th century and continuing today, concerns learning in a new information age.

The Evolutionary Era

This history begins only 27 years after the landing of the first English-speaking pilgrims at Plymouth Rock, when they established a regulatory act to govern their first “grammar” school (1635). Early European settlers came to America to escape religious persecution, and they pursued their personal religious beliefs with vigor. Martin Luther had taught that the Bible must be read to ward off the work of the Devil, and so the first known education regulation, the Old Deluder Satan Act (1647), established schools for that purpose.

A second purpose for education in America, established quite early, was to develop a “literate citizen” capable of participating in acts of governance for the common good. Benjamin Franklin, for instance, spoke often of the “rise of the common man” and the need for strong citizen participation. The concept of a “participatory democracy” rationalized many early schools in America.

Finally, a third idea about schools in the colonies was that they were useful for promoting the common good and for bringing about desired changes in society.
Following the War of 1812, for instance, schools were expected to teach about national identity and emerging beliefs.

As settlement spread in the colonial areas and beyond, establishment of schools went hand-in-hand with the development of communities. Usually, such schools were of minimal duration (several years at most), were taught in a one-room schoolhouse erected by the community, and focused on basic literacy skills. Quite early, these “American” schools took on characteristics that were unlike European schools of that era.

Horace Mann (1796–1859), forever linked to early education efforts in this nation, is often called the father of the American public school. Mann, a legislator and U.S. congressional representative from Massachusetts, was instrumental in passing early laws governing education in his home state. He helped establish the first teacher-training institution in 1839 and later served as the first commissioner of education in Massachusetts. He advocated schooling that was universal, free, and nonsectarian. After a visit to Prussia in 1843, Mann returned to the United States to establish a “graded school ladder” concept and helped gain support for the first tax-supported elementary schools in 1850.

As early as 1779, Thomas Jefferson was advocating free schools for the children of colonists. This proposal was in stark contrast to the prevailing European practice in which “dual tracks” of free and private education were maintained. A Free Public School Society was formed around 1800 in New York City and educated more than 600,000 pupils in its 50-year history. Indicative of the early social functions of education in the United States was the provision of the Northwest Ordinance (1787), which mandated that all townships in new states set aside land for schools as a precondition for becoming recognized communities.

Paralleling the establishment of this popular education system in the elementary grades was an unrelated system of higher education dating from the establishment of Harvard College in 1636. The higher education system, unlike the public elementary system, was private and exclusive, and was focused solely on producing learned men and leaders for the emerging nation. It is very important to understand the distinction between the two systems because even in the 21st century, various philosophies compete to define education in our society. The roots of these differences were present from the beginning of our nation.

Private education in the early colonies produced judges, legislators, governors, and persons in other leadership roles. On finishing the elementary years, these students would secure a tutor or attend an academy to prepare for college. This private bridge to leadership roles in American society existed for most of the 18th and 19th centuries. Eventually, laws to support secondary schools with taxes (1821) and the establishment of public land-grant colleges and universities (1862) began to break this private schooling domination. Public taxation for secondary schools became universal in the United States following the historic Kalamazoo case, an 1872 Michigan Supreme Court case.

Thus, after two centuries, a solid educational system consisting of both public and private elements had been established in the United States and was being supported by citizens. With the exception of the turmoil surrounding the Civil War, the development of schools was an ever-expanding process leading to the establishment of this nation’s largest and strongest institution. The purpose of the American school was clearly the promotion of literacy and knowledge acquisition, but with signs of some social utility mixed in.

The final stage for completing the universal school ladder in the United States came during the 1890s, when a number of national committees met to organize and
coordinate both the subjects taught and the levels of schooling. By far, the best known of these committees was the prestigious Committee of Ten, headed by President Charles Eliot of Harvard University. Working in 1892 and 1893, this committee sought to coordinate the secondary education programs of the states by establishing college entrance requirements. The committee recommended a standard set of high school courses, and a parallel committee established a “unit” measure for each course taken. Thereafter, students were awarded unit credits (Carnegie units) for each course, with a set number required for graduation and college entrance.

Thus, by the end of the 19th century, students could attend tax-supported free public schools for up to 12 years and study a highly standardized curriculum at the secondary level despite the fact that education is uniquely decentralized in America and a “state right” according to the U.S. Constitution (a residual right by omission). As the 20th century began, a traditional and standard form of education was in place (see Figure 1.1).

The Modern Era

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, new ideas about children and learning were emerging in Europe. The traditional wisdom of that era viewed children as incomplete adults who needed to be shaped into preferred forms. Several European educators challenged those traditional views and became early advocates for working with the young in different ways.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) was one of the earliest writers to see children as unfolding and malleable. Writing in his book Émile (1762), Rousseau argued that children were innately good (not evil) and called for a controlled environment in which positive growth could occur naturally. Rousseau believed that learning was most successful when education began with the student’s interests.

Another early child advocate was Johann Pestalozzi (1746–1827), who advocated a learning-by-doing approach to education. In his book Leonard and Gertrude (1781), Pestalozzi described the behavior of children at his school in Yverdon, Switzerland, an early laboratory school. This educator is known for addressing the growth of the whole child in learning: the head, the heart, and the hands.

A third widely read European of this era, Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852), has been credited with establishing the early kindergarten (Kleinkinderschaftig) and having an important impact on later American education. Froebel, who had studied with Pestalozzi, spoke of the natural development in children and developed readiness materials to help each child move along in his or her early growth.

Finally, the German educator Johann Herbart (1776–1841) influenced the thoughts of U.S. educators, but with a different philosophical orientation. Unlike Rousseau,
Pestalozzi, and Froebel, Herbart believed that schools should be highly structured and should prepare future citizens of the sociopolitical community by shaping their minds. He felt that teachers could “build” the minds of children from the outside using subject matter as building blocks and delivering information through systematic lesson plans. Education for Herbart was a social mission rather than a matter of individual growth in pupils, and his methodology stressed concentration and mental immersion to accomplish the mission.

The effect of these European ideas was to suggest that education might be more than recitation and the “pounding in” of predetermined subject matter. Instead of focusing on what the teacher taught, each of these Europeans looked at the child and the methodology as critical. In doing so, they introduced the concept of choice in educational decision making and launched some of the earliest debates about the what, who, and how of planning for learning.

Also affecting the first curriculum debates in this nation was the work of Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and his theory of natural evolution in living things. As the official naturalist on the ship Beagle during its scientific expedition (1831–1836), Darwin documented that different surroundings tend to produce different outcomes in the growth of plants and animals (On the Origin of Species, 1859). Although educators did not directly apply Darwin’s theory to education, his ideas were certainly in the minds of many educators who first began to explore the possibility that environment influenced learning.

At a centennial celebration in Philadelphia in 1876, many of the ideas just mentioned were showcased for American educators and soon took root in their writings. From that time on, more than one conception of education existed in the United States, and modern educational theory competed with traditional beliefs about education. During this period of early diversity, knowledge became the focus of traditional educators. Francis Parker, for example, began a unification process in 1883 to define subject areas. An early survey of teaching practices by Joseph Mayer Rice (1892) found the public school curriculum to be “meandering” and disorganized. In that same year, Eliot’s Committee of Ten began advocating five common content areas (his “windows on the soul”) to serve as college entrance prerequisites for all students, regardless of their home state. These notions of a general education quickly shaped all public school thinking and were based on a “like students and single purpose” rationale. Traditionalists saw all children progressing through a fixed, sequential curriculum with progress marked by a ladder of grade levels.

In sharp contrast to these traditionalists, new or progressive educators at the turn of the century were building on the European ideas of the late 19th century. These educators saw each child as unique and sought to broaden the purpose of education to include both social and personal development. John Dewey (1859–1952) is usually credited with bridging this gap from an older and more traditional definition of education to the newer and distinctly American definition of progressive education. Dewey built on those earlier European thoughts to advocate a new and very active definition of education for children. Seeing the mind as something to be developed (not filled or shaped), Dewey suggested taking old principles of learning and demonstrating practical applications as defined by the experiences of the learner. The goal of education, according to Dewey, was to both organize and activate knowledge. But, said Dewey, the learner rather than the teacher is the source of such organization. Each individual, he proposed, must find ideas that work in practical experience and see these ideas as truth.
Dewey gained credibility as a writer and theorist as he applied his theories at the University of Chicago Laboratory School (1896–1904). Here, children learned by doing through something called project work. Dewey later advocated the need for citizens in a democracy to find the truths of participation during the school years by living in a democratic institution. His book *Democracy and Education* (1916) is a classic statement of this belief.

Dewey’s influence around the beginning of the 20th century is hard to overstate. Many of his students at the University of Chicago, such as Harold Rugg (*The Child-Centered School*, 1928) and George Counts (*Dare the School Create a New Social Order*, 1932), became major advocates of progressive ideas. The formation of the Progressive Education Association (PEA) in 1919 led to many publications and applications of Dewey’s theory.

If a single year could be selected for a time when the true differences in approaches to education in the United States became evident, it would probably be 1918. In that year, a new perspective of secondary education, the Seven Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, was proposed by the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. The first text on curriculum was written and published (Bobbitt, *The Curriculum*, 1918). Dramatically, the American way of educating was unfolding, and the field of curriculum was emerging as a subspecialty of professional education.

Curriculum emerged as a specialized area of study from the growing need to study, order, arrange, and otherwise rationalize the changing forms of American education. Gathering the many visions, clarifying the intentions, organizing schooling structures, implementing programs, and assessing the success of curricula in meeting goals required a new subspecialty in education. Decisions about whether the school should teach a body of knowledge, help develop the individual student, or promote social programs and priorities could not be effectively made in a decentralized education system. In reality, United States education programs simply evolved during these formative years. The new pattern of schooling that emerged from a traditional model of scholarship was superimposed on a coarse and dynamic culture.

The Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education was formed in 1913 and met for 5 years to resolve some of the emerging issues. The committee debated the three conceptions (academic, personal, and social) and studied the many new philosophies and learning theories. In 1918, this committee produced the Seven Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, which stands today as the definitive statement on the purpose of American education. These purposes (listed below) for United States educational planning are still referred to regularly by educational curriculum workers:

1. Health
2. Command of fundamental processes
3. Home membership
4. Vocation
5. Citizenship
6. Use of leisure time
7. Ethical character

As the 20th century began, American education was in transition from a classical system practiced for centuries throughout the world to a more expedient form of schooling.
that served broader purposes. Among the accomplishments of the new system by 1900 were the following:

- Schooling was a state responsibility rather than a church role.
- Public education was seen as a social need, not a charity.
- Education was a right of citizens, not a privilege.
- Taxes could be used to support education through secondary levels.
- Education was compulsory for all children in all states.
- Control of education was established at the state level.
- Subjects were a constant in educational planning for learning.
- Human development was perceived as evolutionary.
- Schools could be used to promote social unity.
- Education could be used for social regeneration.

Among the newer realities for curriculum theorists by the time of Bobbitt’s first text was an awareness of humanistic thought, an emerging awareness of human development, and the beginning of mechanistic (behavioral) processes used to engineer curriculum development. These forces and others both broadened the horizons for early planners and presented them with a large number of choices in defining education.

The growth of the modern education system in the United States, from the beginning of the 20th century until the early 21st century, reflected all of these early trends. Schools grew in number, curricula diversified, and social forces such as wars, depressions, and the racial integration of the society modified the basic form of the American school. A timeline of many of these important events is shown in Figure 1.2.

The Postmodern Era

Schools during the modern era of education in the United States, like most educational agencies worldwide, operated under some unspoken assumptions that characterized the society. It was assumed, for example, that all Americans held the same values—those of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. It was accepted that schools were the place of learning and that only schools could “certify” an education. It was acknowledged that the purpose of becoming educated was “to know” and that the process of education required a knowledgeable teacher to be successful. In sporadic fashion, all these assumptions undergirding a modern and traditional education system began to break down in the United States and throughout the world during the 40-year period from 1960 to 2000.

The signs of change in the United States appeared during the civil rights period in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The concept of *e pluribus unum* (“from many, one”) was deemed inapplicable to some populations. Blacks, Hispanics, women, lesbians, gay males, handicapped persons, and other populations were forced to use law and demonstration to establish their place in U.S. society. This discovery of many publics (i.e., various groups advocating for their interests) and multiculturalism was accelerated during the protests following the Vietnam War era. The war in Indochina raised serious questions about race and ethnicity back home in the American society.

By the end of the 1980s, in many communities, schools became the battleground for the promotion of cultural values. In the 1990s, this competition for control of schools would lead a few curriculum theorists to a postmodern stance. The idea that schools were “the learning place” soon came under attack as their biases toward certain populations were
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>400 B.C.</td>
<td>Height of Greek influence when ideas of tutorial learning and elite leadership training were first formalized.</td>
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<tr>
<td>400 A.D.</td>
<td>Height of the Roman Empire that modeled a far more popular “citizenship model” education system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>Beginning of Dark Ages, during which civilization declined and knowledge was preserved by individual scholarship and early monastic libraries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Beginning of the Enlightenment, during which civilization reemerged; early universities founded in France, Italy, Spain, and England.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1456</td>
<td>First books printed by printing presses—dispersion of knowledge to masses begins.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1492</td>
<td>Columbus finds the Americas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>First Latin grammar schools in England.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1536</td>
<td>First classical secondary school (Gymnasium) established in Germany.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1620</td>
<td>Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts, established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1635</td>
<td>Boston Latin grammar schools founded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1636</td>
<td>Harvard University founded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1647</td>
<td>In Massachusetts the Old Deluder Satan Act compels establishment of schools when 50 households are present in a community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1650</td>
<td>First tax support for schools in Massachusetts.</td>
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<td>1751</td>
<td>Benjamin Franklin establishes the first academy (secondary school).</td>
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<td>1779</td>
<td>Thomas Jefferson proposes a “free school” for Virginian men and women for up to 3 years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Northwest Ordinance passed, which established provisions for territories to become states, including mandatory school sites in townships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Constitution of the United States adopted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>New York Free School society established to educate 500,000 pupils without expense.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Boston English Classical School established; first tax-supported secondary school.</td>
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<td>1852</td>
<td>First compulsory school laws passed in Massachusetts by Horace Mann.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Morrill Land Grant Act establishes land for public universities in all states (engineering, military science, and agriculture).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Michigan Supreme Court upholds tax support for secondary schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Francis Parker establishes the first subject matter groupings as an early form of curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>First comprehensive study of American education by Joseph M. Rice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Charles Eliot, president of Harvard University, forms the Committee of Ten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>John Dewey opens the University of Chicago Laboratory School to demonstrate alternative teaching methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>First comprehensive physiological studies of school children in New York by G. Stanley Hall.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.2** Timeline of Events in the Growth of the Modern Education System.

revealed. In particular, Ivan Illich’s 1971 book *Deschooling Society* and the book by Bowles and Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America*, portrayed American schools as simple extensions of an economic system needing to control and select its agents. Popular books by Jonathan Kohl, Jack Heardon, and others painted less than flattering portraits of the American schoolroom. Charles Silberman’s *Crisis in the Classroom* gave the condition a name.

Coupled with this unveiling of the “real school” was an accountability movement born out of sheer financial need. As the inflation of the 1970s and 1980s ate into school budgets, the cry for outcome-based education and results eroded general support for schools. Alternative forms of school were invented and even legislated.

Finally, the notion that a knowledgeable teacher was required for the schooling process to be successful fell away with the advent of the personal computer; a drill master far superior to an individual classroom teacher when it comes to mastery instruction. The richness and variety of the Internet completely discounted student dependence on a teacher or any other single source of learning for information.

And so, as the 20th century drew to a close, the purpose and rationale of education, and even the method of becoming educated, was in disarray. Postmodern theorists
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urged the oppressed and enlightened to throw off the shackles of the public school and create their own curriculum with personal relevance based on their own values. Aronowitz and Giroux, in their text *Postmodern Education*, advised that “curriculum’s historic function was to name and privilege particular histories and experiences. In its current and dominant form, the curriculum does so in such a way as to marginalize or silence the voices of subordinate groups” (p. 13).

In the first 15 years of the 21st century the options for learning have continued to expand. The new interactive technologies provide personal avenues to learning for everyone; learning that is distinctively nonlinear and interactive. Schooling choices for students in the form of charter schools are expanding and found in most school districts. Control issues continue to chip away at any uniform school design. With these conditions pressing schools, American education continues to move forward.

GLOBAL REFLECTIONS

The way in which the field of curriculum has developed in the United States, outlined in this chapter, is not unique. Throughout the world, other nations have struggled with similar problems relating to rapid changes in their societies and in their definition of education and schooling. In South Africa, for example, a century-old practice of apartheid ended suddenly, and educational leaders were forced to redesign a public education for all students in that country. Many of the young black students (ages 6 to 12) had never been to school at all when the change occurred in February 1990. The new socialization roles called for in these schools, to overcome the enormous gulf between the races and socioeconomic stations, were monumental. Your author was privileged to participate in planning sessions in the early 1990s to re-create education in that nation and saw firsthand the miracle of such nation building through school planning. The work to create a modern and responsive education system in South Africa continues today.

In Scotland, your author observed a very different example of redesigning a curriculum. While already housing a fine and classical European education system, Scotland desired to align itself with a new world economy in which the nation of China will obviously be a major player. Various language programs and student exchange programs were instituted so that Scotland might serve as a primary “trade door to Europe” for Chinese commerce in the future. Scotland also recognized quite early the influence of new information technologies in world communications and rushed to construct a high-tech 21st-century education system in all of its schools. These activities have dominated national planning for education in Scotland for a decade or more.

In Vietnam, following a period of wars lasting almost three decades, the nation reviewed its educational system’s connection to the national economy and found it wanting. While a fine traditional system existed to train a minimal number of leaders and scholars, the popular system was not serving the nation as well as in other Asian countries of similar size. The cost of replicating the 20th-century public systems found in other countries was beyond the means of the Vietnamese government, and educational leaders in that nation began to ponder the possibility of “jumping to the 21st century” using new wireless technologies. In a matter of only a few years, Vietnam has developed a strong technological substructure to aid this goal (see Figure 1.3).

The challenge for Vietnam and other developing nations with similar concerns is how to leave the older system and embrace new educational delivery systems without interruption. A prerequisite to such a transfer is an analysis of the current curriculum,
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beginning with a clear definition of purpose. Your author is proud to have contributed to this assessment.

In China, the complete disruption of traditional education under the Cultural Revolution has forced today’s leaders to reconstruct the general education system from scratch. A substantial program of education for all citizens has been built in a short period, and China has focused on higher education during the past decade. The work to use education as a vehicle for nation-building continues with a new 10-year plan adopted in 2010.

China is unique in its value system undergirding schooling. In a belief system dating from the time of Confucius (551–479 B.C.), Chinese education seeks to produce productive citizens who can serve society; the child excels for the nation and not for self. In conflict with this goal, however, has been an exam-focused meritocracy that sorts and orders the social roles of students. Focusing the newer system on a program of general education, while maintaining quality control, has proven challenging for curriculum leaders of that nation.

The Cayman Islands, an existing British colony, are in the process of creating a world-class education system through comprehensive curriculum planning. Already a major center for world banking, the Cayman Islands hope to develop a new high-tech education system to serve students living on the three small islands that make up this nation.
Technology will be the centerpiece of a system designed to overcome the nation’s small size and isolation. Your author helped to guide that national conception of curriculum.

These five examples of nations that are redesigning education are representative, to some degree, of all nations on Earth. Each nation has its own aspirations, history, resources, and limitations, and each has its own definition of what education should be. In every nation, education is tied directly to that national development and future planning. Curriculum is the critical function in the education of all countries and an important instrument for addressing all nationality issues. More will be said about these common global efforts to reform curriculum in the final chapter.

Summary
Curriculum is a century-old area of study in education, and it is experiencing massive change. Technology, with its new ways of treating information, requires a different paradigm for curriculum leaders. This change presents new challenges and new opportunities.

Definitions of curriculum reflect the scope of school programs. The author has presented three eras in which the definition of curriculum has grown as our society has changed. Multiple philosophies and learning theories present planners with a rich foundation for study and many possible educational choices. A new era of curriculum is unfolding that is witnessing massive changes in how we educate our young in the United States.

Activities

ACTIVITY 1.1
This chapter presents the evolution of curriculum in terms of three phases: evolutionary, modern, and postmodern. What evidence has been presented that such an evolution has occurred?

ACTIVITY 1.2
Consider adding a fifth planning foundation—technology—for curriculum work in the 21st century. How would this newest “basis of planning” affect the other four foundations? For example, how would technology affect knowledge acquisition or learning?

Additional Reading