CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

*Read the **Instructions & Guidelines** module before doing this module.*

OBJECTIVES

After reading this module, you should be able to:

- Explain what *curriculum* is.
- Describe the 5 steps in curriculum development: Curriculum/*Program Overview, Course Outline, Course Content, Syllabus,* and *Lesson Plans.*
- Describe a *building block approach* to curriculum development.

In Teaching Fundamentals, Module 4 – Teaching Strategies & Techniques, you were introduced to the concept of curriculum, syllabus and lesson plans, and in this module we will look at these in more detail.

A Process for Curriculum Development

This curriculum development process is targeted at practical skills based courses which also include a knowledge component. While planning and developing a curriculum is usually done by a program director or head instructor, understanding the process will help you, as an instructor, to implement the curriculum and prepare or modify lesson plans.

Curriculum/Program Overview

The curriculum for any instructional program is a cursory summation of all courses offered within a program and the major topics covered in each course.

Designing a curriculum requires a planner to determine which courses will be offered, how they relate to each other, and the total hours available for each course. Integrating each course into a cohesive curriculum enhances program flow and is the ultimate goal of curriculum planning. A good curriculum forms a logical progression from one course level to the next, emphasizing the **building block approach** of increasing complexity to match the ability and skills of the students while also reviewing previous skills learned.

After deciding on the courses to be offered and their time allotment, the program planner develops:

- **Course Outline**
- **Course Content**
- **Syllabus**
- **Lesson Plans**

Course Outline

A course outline serves as a **rough guide for the skills and information to be taught** in each course. When combined together, the course outlines will provide the structure for the whole program curriculum. A course outline should take into account the program goals and the ability level of the students in each course. Furthermore, a course outline should organize topic areas so they utilize *the building block method* of instruction by starting with basic skills and progressing to complex skills.

Course Content

Course content is an elaboration of the course outline, specifically identifying the topics and skills to be taught in each course. To begin development of a course content, place all the topics for instruction in your curriculum/program on a list starting with basic skills and progressing to complex skills. While each course should have its own topics of study, there should be some overlap in topics to facilitate a smooth progression in courses. Instruction should begin with basic skills (e.g., starting, stopping, turning) and work toward combining skills to develop more complex skills (e.g., docking).

Syllabus

A syllabus is a list of topics and activities to be covered in a course and may include a breakdown of times for each session and activity in the classroom, at the dockside, and on the water. It provides flow and continuity from lesson to lesson and also serves as an outline for each lesson plan.

When planning the length of each class session, take into consideration:

- Length of the course
- Goals and activities of the session
- Attention span of the students
- Difficulty of the skill (e.g., more practice time for complex skills)
- Time to get to and from the practice area
- Break time
- Assimilation time to learn new knowledge and skills
- Equipment and pre-departure checks prior to each on-water session
- Securing boat and equipment after each on-water session
- Local weather conditions
- Possibility of challenging weather and current conditions
- Format for your type of program

Lesson Plans

Refer to your syllabus to determine the topics for each lesson plan, then plan activities and methods of instruction that will best convey information to your students. You should try to plan one goal for each session with no more than 2 or 3 central concepts from that goal. You may find that it is necessary to introduce *secondary* concepts to support and help to explain the central concepts of your lesson, much like the supporting cast of a movie elaborates on the plot.

There are a number of ways to prepare lesson plans, but whatever format you use it should include the following:

- Lesson goal
- General areas to be covered (central concepts)
- Activities
- Time for each activity
- Method used to instruct each activity
- Equipment needs

Your lesson plans should be detailed enough for another instructor to use in the event that you are unable to teach a class. A complete and detailed lesson plan will keep your class on target and produce the goals you set. Keep the pace lively and use a variety of activities so each lesson is interactive and students are involved.

Curriculum Development Considerations

- Take time to plan and develop your curriculum for best results. Review previous lesson plans and student evaluations to improve existing curriculum.

- Make **safety, fun and learning** essential ingredients for a course. Safety and learning are obvious, but making the learning experience enjoyable enhances and facilitates learning.

- Use the **blocking block approach** to link and build on knowledge and skills learned from lesson to lesson and from course to course.

- Focus on the essential skills and knowledge to allow your students to master the skills and assimilate the information, which will make them feel successful and want to learn more.

- Be realistic about the time an average student needs to learn and master basic and complex skills. There will always be less time than you need, and more skills that you would like to teach.

- Allow enough time for beginning students to learn and master basic skills before progressing to more advanced skills.

- Pace the learning time for your students by striking a balance between going slowly enough for everyone to **master** a skill and rushing ahead so quickly that

students don't **learn** how to perform the skill correctly. When teaching a new skill for the first time, every student may not be able to perform the skill perfectly, but they should understand **how** to do it and the areas they need to improve for mastery of the skill.

- Use a variety of activities and drills to keep your class fresh and exciting.

- Put yourself in the shoes of your students when developing a syllabus and lesson plan.

- Teach things correctly the first time so you don't have to teach them again. Correcting incorrect habits down the road is far more difficult and time consuming than teaching skills properly the first time around.

True or False

1. _____ When planning curriculum, you should consider the difficulty of the skills, total number of sessions, length of the course, and format of the program.
2. _____ After determining the overview of the curriculum, the program planner should develop course outline, course content, syllabus and lesson plans.
3. _____ A pivot turn should be taught after docking has been mastered.
4. _____ A lesson plan should include a daily goal, equipment needs, times for activities, and instructing methods.

Multiple Choice (choose correct answer)

5. Which of the following is a rough guide for the skills and information to be taught in each course when developing curriculum?
   _____ a. course content

   _____ b. course outline

   _____ c. lesson plan

   _____ d. syllabus

6. Which of the following is a list of topics and activities to be covered in a course and may include a breakdown of times?
   _____ a. course content

   _____ b. course outline

   _____ c. lesson plan

   _____ d. syllabus

7. Which of the following is an elaboration of the course outline and specifically identifies the topics and skills to be taught in each course?
   _____ a. course content

   _____ b. course outline

   _____ c. lesson plan

   _____ d. syllabus

8. Which of the following includes the goal for the lesson, central concepts, activities, time needed for each activity, teaching methods, and equipment needs?

_____ a. course content

_____ b. course outline

_____ c. lesson plan

_____ d. syllabus

Questions to Think About & Ask Yourself

9. Your course syllabus and lesson plans are prepared for the local conditions in your area, which normally are winds calm or light in the morning and slowing increasing to 15 knots in the mid afternoon. The weather forecasted for the first day of your entry-level course is for strong winds at 15 to 20 knots all day. How would you adjust your syllabus and lesson plans for the day to accommodate this weather forecast? Refer to the course content and or syllabus to assist you with this question.

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10. You are teaching an advanced boating class, and your plan for the day is structured for normal conditions of light winds in the morning with winds slowly increasing to 15 knots by mid-afternoon. In the morning, your plan starts with 1½ hours for classroom and dockside, followed by 1½ hours of on-water practice with a ¼ hour classroom debriefing. In the afternoon, the class starts with 1 hour for classroom, followed by 2½ hours of on-water practice, and ending with 1½ hours of classroom. However, the weather forecasted for the day has changed to strong winds of 20 to 25 knots in the afternoon. How would you adjust your plan for the day to accommodate this weather forecast?

_____

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Think About...

It takes 30 minutes or more to get out to the open-water practice area for the course you are teaching. **Think about** ways to maximize your students' learning during the inbound and outbound passages instead of letting your students spend their time with little to do. Some instructors use this time to review the application of navigation aids and piloting along the route. **Think about** situations of where you may, or may not, be on the boat with your students. **Think about** what safety consideration would you implement to ensure the safe operation and lookout while maximizing the students' learning.

Answers:

1. T
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. B
6. D
7. A
8. C