

Chapter 2

Fundamentals in Program Development

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, politics have become more and more intertwined with education, often leading to non-academic curriculum control. This is most apparent than in the fields of high school education in subject matters such as science, sex education, and racial studies, but is not limited to these subjects nor limited to the high school level of education. Furthermore, this influence-seeking is not just limited to politics and politicians, but can also be found in the form of money and donors seeking to influence specific curricula or programs. This form of influence-seeking threatens the entire nation's intellectual freedom as it can happen entirely outside of the democratic process. Developing programs requires instructors to take several factors into consideration, and politics should not be one of them. These factors can be viewed as critical components of program development for education instructors. Without adequately addressing critical components such as program history, curriculum theory, curriculum philosophies, curriculum processes, as well as program and curriculum implementation and evaluation, education instructors will fail to develop sound/meaningful programs. This chapter will shed light on relevant information about program and curriculum development on its history, theory, philosophies of development, processes, implementation, and evaluation. The value of such as review is to assist those individuals seeking a teaching credential in education to have confidence to blend program development with their prior occupational knowledge and skills. The chapter will also examine caveats and dangers when social and political constructs are overlaid in compartments.

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INTRODUCTION: WHERE CURRICULUM MAY GO ADRIFT

The Governance of Curriculum

Colleges are no longer able to establish curriculum and the pacing of certain courses due to accreditation bodies such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (Russo & Brittain, 2012). The professoriate does not have the freedom to expand or develop the curriculum as it sees fit, although the members of the professoriate are the knowledge experts (Russo & Brittain, 2012). Course assignments and assessments are also driven by these standards, inhibiting academic and intellectual freedom; public universities are internally and externally monitored in terms of assessments. Curriculum governance at the higher education level has been hampered (Russo & Brittain, 2012). It is unfortunate that curriculum could not be in the hands of the professoriate whose members are the experts and have attained terminal degrees in their area of expertise, curtailing the contribution of faculty intelligentsia by trustees and boards controlling the universities, state governors, state legislatures, and political factions with their own agendas (Russo & Brittain, 2012). This situation is a cause of concern for academic and intellectual freedom. Without academic freedom and information from educational voices, political functionaries are controlling the truth within the curriculum, thus democracy and citizen freedom becomes threatened.

Non-Academic Curriculum Control

In terms of non-academic curriculum governance, it could stem from the fact that curriculum is lucrative for those who would like to gain public, or even private, funding. Schools purchase books and all kinds of equipment, which create a benefit for private business and over time may create a system that restricts other vendors from even applying. “With businessmen at the helm of the education system, is it any wonder that by mid-century that system had transitioned into a huge market for business” (Zale, 2012, p. 2). As this is still the current state of affairs, education continues to be a lucrative business for those in private pursuits who wish to have a piece of the marketing pie. In fact, scientific research is often funded by interested businesses or business associations, which can lead to the suppression of unfavorable evidence to misclassification of evidence, both of which can ultimately influence policy-making at every level of government. An egregious example of this has been the efforts of Big Tobacco, which continue to this day, to deny the carcinogenic nature of tobacco smoke, both in the forms of first-hand smoke and second-hand smoke (Bates & Rowell, (n.d.).

Business and other interests that have political, social, and economic agendas, as well as a business mission to increase shareholder wealth could take control of changing curriculum to accomplish this mission. Program and curriculum governance and the privatization of such could lend itself to a hazardous situation for the populus. In this respect, too, entities with political, social, and economic agendas could ultimately control the message when it comes to what is or is not researched and what is and is not taught. Private industries that have involved themselves in the public domain of education and ultimately curriculum are the Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, the Broad Foundation, and Pearson (Zale, 2012, p. 3).

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