A TASK FOR CURRICULUM RESEARCH

*JOHN A. ZAHORIK**

Planning models must be compatible with and actually facilitate the implementation of the particular program or practice that is going to be used. To do this, other planning models need to be developed and tested. This is the task for curriculum research.

IN some form it exists everywhere. In cooking it is a flour sieve, a soup strainer, or a coffee percolator. In travel it is a border crossing station or an airport electronic security check. In the military it is called basic training. In industry it might be a mechanical sorter or an x-ray scanner.

This widespread phenomenon is a screen. It filters out impurities and only permits objects with certain qualities to pass through. It reduces differentness and variety to uniformity and standardization.

The field of curriculum is not unique. It has screens also. One screen is the lesson plan or unit plan that teachers prepare in writing or in mental-note form. All curriculum changes, before they can get into the classroom, are filtered through the lesson plan or unit plan. If the teacher wishes to use new materials, they get filtered through the plan. If the teacher wishes to attempt a new teaching method, it gets filtered through the plan. New learning activities for students, new subject matter topics, new evaluation procedures all get filtered in the same way.

To filter through the lesson plan or unit plan means to incorporate the change into the lesson plan or unit plan before actually instituting the change in the classroom. The effect of this process is enormous. The plan strokes and shapes the changes that are put into it in such a way that what comes out of it can be qualitatively different. If change A is put into type X plan, the change comes out with X qualities. If change A is put into type Y plan, the change comes out with Y qualities. There is nothing inherently wrong with this filtering process, but it is important to understand it and be in control of it.

Only the Tyler Model

One of the major curriculum problems that exists today is that there is only one way of planning, and therefore, only one filter or screen through which all curriculum ideas or practices must be routed. This crystallized plan which is used in planning a lesson, a class session, a unit, a course, or a curriculum guide consists of four main decisions: identifying objectives, selecting learning experiences, organizing learning experiences, and selecting evaluation procedures.

Ralph Tyler (8) is usually identified as the creator of this planning model. In 1950 he authored *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* which contains this set of

John A. Zahorik, Professor of Education, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

familiar decisions. The model, however, began to take shape as early as 1936 when Tyler was involved in evaluating the Eight-Year Study. In more recent years many variations of the objectives–experiences–evaluation model have arisen. The models developed by Taba (7), Goodlad (3), Popham and Baker (6), and Gagné and Briggs (2) can all be viewed as refinements of the Tyler model.

This planning model that has captured American education at all levels and in all content areas seems neutral, but it is not. It carries with it a particular value position on human nature. It carries with it the view that in human action a person first decides on a goal and then expends time and energy to achieve it. The goals or ends are separate from the activity or means, and they precede and direct the activity or means. When this conception of human action is applied to planning curriculum it results in an empha-

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sis on specific objectives. Objectives are the first and most important decision to be made if the class session is to be a productive one. It also results in an under emphasis on learning activities. Learning activities are a secondary decision that must be directly related to the stated objective if they are to be effective in meeting the objective.

The Tyler model with its separate ends-means orientation is a logical, rational approach to curriculum planning. In many ways it is an application of science and technology to the field of curriculum much as they have been applied to industry, government, and the military. There is little doubt that the model "works," that it can result in effectiveness and efficiency of learning. But, the problem is that it imparts its separate

ends-means value position to the curriculum that is funneled through it. Frequently the value position of the model is inconsistent with and damaging to the type of learning activity the teacher wishes to use, the kind of materials the teacher intends to employ, the teacher's own set of values, and other factors associated with the teaching-learning situation.

An example of the inappropriateness of the Tyler model may be seen in relation to open education. Teachers who wish to install open education in their classrooms generally have a commitment to increasing student intellectual and physical freedom. They believe that students need to make decisions for themselves and take responsibility for their actions. They believe that students need to acquire personal meanings and become autonomous persons. When it comes to providing learning experiences or selecting subject matter or deciding about materials and resources, however, many open education teachers use the Tyler planning model. Their notions about open education are fed into the Tyler model and most of them get stuck on the wire mesh because the Tyler model and open education are largely incompatible.

The Tyler model with its ends before means maximizes teacher power and control because it is the teacher who establishes the objectives and establishes them in advance of selecting learning experiences. The students, since they have no or little influence over objectives, have little freedom and independence. They must follow the direction set by the teacher rather than find their own. Open education, on the other hand, maximizes student power and control. Open education encourages students to be self-directed and to choose for themselves what learnings to pursue.

The Tyler planning model simply does not suit open education nor does it suit other programs or practices that emphasize student independence, self-direction, and responsibility such as affective education and inquiry learning. It suits many types of programs or practices, but it cannot be the filter through which all programs must be processed. Instead, planning models should

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be used that are compatible with and actually facilitate the implementation of the particular program or practice that is going to be used. To do this, however, other planning models need to be developed and tested. This is the task for curriculum research.

Needed: An Integrated Ends-Means Model

To develop other planning models is not going to be easy because in many respects the separate ends-means approach to action is embedded in òur culture. To think of other ways to plan or prepare for action seems like a challenge to reason itself. New planning models are essential, however.

One possible alternative is a model based on an integrated ends-means conception of human action. This would be a model that builds on the viewpoint that ends do not precede and direct means or activities but rather emerge from activity to redirect the activity and add meaning to it. Learning activity becomes a primary consideration from this perspective rather than a secondary consideration. Doll (1), Kliebard (4), and Macdonald, Wolfson, and Zaret (5) have

proposed and discussed this value position, but a specific planning model to compete with the Tyler model still needs to be developed.

One possible alternative is insufficient. Many new models need to be developed if planning models are to be tools that facilitate and enhance rather than devices that mold and destroy.

The second part of the task for curriculum research is to test the models that have been generated. This involves examining the effects of each new model on two aspects of teaching: (a) preparation for classroom action, and (b) classroom behavior of the teacher. The major questions that need to be asked and answered about teachers' use of the model are:

1. *Is the model usable?* Are the elements of the model consistent? Do they result in a meaningful whole? Are they clear and understandable? Is the format of the model appropriate? Are the elements organized and stated in a way that facilitates usage?

2. *Is the model helpful?* Is the model consistent with the program or practice the teacher intends to employ? Does the model facilitate the teacher's preparation and classroom behavior in relation to the program or practice to be used? Does the model help to clarify and improve the program or practice?

Research on new planning models can have far-reaching implications for teaching and, consequently, for learning. Curriculum researchers need to begin this task now.

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