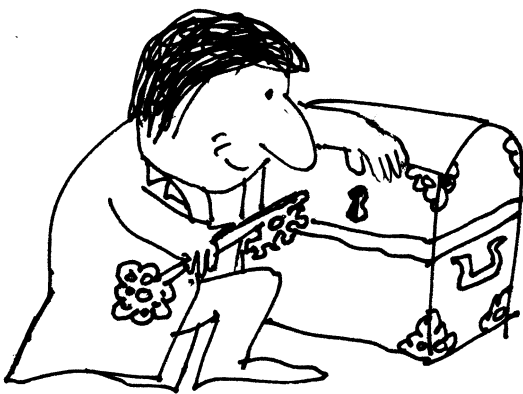


INTRODUCTION



This chapter aims to assist you when you become involved in some way in curriculum planning and wish to do so in a systematic manner. Unfortunately, there is no straightforward formula to guide you in this activity. The reasons for this are as follows. First, curriculum planning is a complex business involving more than purely educational considerations. For example, you will find that full account must be taken of the political and economic context in which you teach. Second, relatively few courses are started from scratch. Much curriculum development is a matter of revising and adapting existing courses or materials. And third, there are important differences between individuals – especially between individuals working in different disciplines – in the ways in which they view a variety of educational issues. You may, for instance, see your main function as transmitting appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes. On the other hand you may perceive your role as being primarily concerned with the personal and social development of your students as well as with their intellectual development. In a book of this kind it is not possible to provide a discussion which can fully take into account these various orientations. However, we believe that you should be aware of these differences and we would encourage you to read further on the matter to help develop your own particular orientation and your own approach to curriculum development.



In our view, the key to good curriculum or course design is to forge educationally sound and logical links between planned intentions (expressed as objectives), course content, teaching and learning methods, and the assessment of student learning while taking account of student characteristics. In the past, too many courses started with vague intentions, consisted of teaching which had a tenuous relationship to these intentions and employed methods of assessment which bore little or no relationship to either. Such courses then placed students in the unfortunate situation of playing a guessing game, with their academic future as the stake! This pattern can be improved by adopting an approach which aligns the intentions with course content, teaching, and the assessment.



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