

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION 471-4
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Intersession, 1991
(May 6 – June 14)
Tuesday & Thursday, 8:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
Location: MPX 7600

Instructor: Dr. Peter Grimmert
Office: MPX 8543
Phone: 291-4937

PREREQUISITE: 60 hours of credit.

COURSE OUTLINE

This course will examine the theoretical underpinnings of various approaches to curriculum development. Beginning with Eisner and Vallance's characterization of conflicting conceptions of curriculum, the course will look at five broad approaches to curriculum development. One of these theoretical approaches subsumes the recent attempt at curriculum integration contained in the Ministry of Education *Year 2000* document. Each of these approaches will be considered according to how it conceives of the following aspects of curriculum:

- a) constitutive elements of a curriculum
- b) psychological bases for curriculum development
- c) social and cultural forces affecting curriculum development
- d) role of subject-matter in curriculum development
- e) curriculum decision-making and organizing learning experiences
- f) curriculum implementation and evaluation
- g) curriculum leadership and teachers

Instruction in the course will work towards the following three purposes: 1) to expose participants thoroughly to the literature in this field of study, 2) to provide opportunities for participants to grasp the substantive ideas with confidence, accuracy, and appropriate use of analytical language, and 3) to engender in participants the ability to make sense of competing theoretical claims, to evaluate conflicting evidence, and to understand the relationship between research findings and practical application.

EXPECTATIONS

Participants are expected to attend all seminars. In addition, participants are expected vigorously to take part in small and large group discussions around topics and issues deriving from the extensive readings. Exercises will be used to frame these discussion activities and participants will be expected to have studied assiduously the relevant readings before the seminar.

ASSIGNMENTS

Case Study (20%): Participants will characterize a recent exemplar of curriculum development. It may be a systemic, collaborative or individual attempt at curriculum development. Particular attention will be paid to the context of the setting in which this curriculum development took place. This assignment is descriptive.

Case analysis (30%): Participants will analyse their case studies in light of the readings and discussion of the course.

Major project (50%): Participants will develop a 12–15 page project which exemplifies how three of the five theoretical approaches to curriculum presented in the course would be implemented in practice. The topic, a participant selected learning experience, would be the same for each curriculum. Participants should ensure that they conclude the project with a comparative analysis of the apparent strengths and shortcomings of the three approaches selected. The assignment will consist of two parts: first, oral presentation of a written draft to the class, and second, re-writing of the paper on the basis of the critique provided by participants and the instructor.

READINGS

Selected readings, as distinct from a set text, will be used in the course.