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Textbook of Nursing Education

CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION

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CHAPTER

6

Curriculum Evaluation Strategies

"Change is the end result of all true learning."

—Leo Buscagila

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter, the learner will be able to:

- Define evaluation of curriculum in nursing.
- Explain the concepts of evaluation in curriculum.
- Determine the nature of curriculum evaluation.
- Enlist the purposes of curriculum evaluation.
- Appreciate the benefits of evaluation of curriculum in nursing.
- Explain the characteristics of curriculum evaluation in nursing.
- Describe the types of curriculum evaluation in nursing.
- Explain the curriculum evaluation plan.
- Describe the process of curriculum evaluation.
- Explain the role of members in curriculum evaluation.
- Describe the need for curriculum change.
- Enumerate the factors influencing the changes in curriculum.

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GLOSSARY

Curriculum evaluation: Evaluation is the systematic process of determining the degree to which changes in behavior are actually taking place.

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is defined as the sum of all experiences, which are to be provided in an educational institution. According to Wheeler (1967) curriculum means the planned experiences offered to the learners under the guidance of the school. A curriculum is an important element which can affect the effectiveness of an educational or a pedagogical program. The main merit of a curriculum is providing the stakeholders with a transparent idea as to what must be achieved during the program conduction and whether the objectives of the program have been met.

Evaluation is designed to assess the cohesion and coherence of curriculum, its design, natures and characteristics and scope of the learner platform.

The developer can measure and assign a quantitative or qualitative value to distinguish learners in order to form judgments. This involves working in an institution or watching television, there is constant assessment in everything they do even in their day-to-day activities. The strive is to be more methodical, structured, and rigorous when engaging in certain processes, but the majority of the daily evaluations are informal and frequently subjective. For example, judging, marking and recording an essay competition in an institution, comparing the temperature or rainfall, etc. In these cases, the evaluation process is more systematic and organized.

Evaluation of curriculum is the imperative stage that includes the process of development and change in curriculum.

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Evaluation of curriculum helps in the development of the country. Evaluation in nursing has become a major concern because of the change in society. Curriculum evaluation focuses on the assessment of philosophy, mission, objectives, teaching and the influence of non-nursing courses to the overall plan of the study.

DEFINITION OF EVALUATION

Evaluation may be defined as a systematic process of determining the extent to which educational objectives are achieved by pupil.

There are several ways in which the term "evaluation" is utilized. To put it briefly, evaluation can be defined as "estimating the magnitude and quality" or "finding out the value of" or "judging the worth of."

There are several approaches to designing evaluation. In terms of education, we can define it in two different ways or perceive it to exist in two different forms:

1. Learning System Evaluation

Decision-makers can benefit from the evaluation process, which can also direct potential improvement plans. It places a strong emphasis on the student and the measurement of learning outcomes, the incorporation of quality and safety ideas into the curriculum, evidence-based practice, transformative science and research, and the use of technology to deliver the curriculum which is inevitable in this current use of technology in all phases of life.

2. Evaluation of Learning Outcomes

Evaluation of learning outcomes is the process of measuring what learners have learned after instruction, based on specific goals or objectives. In other words, **evaluation of learning**

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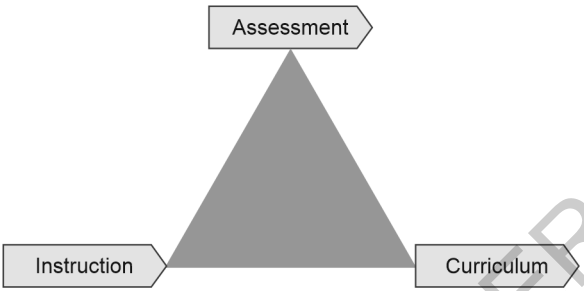

Fig. 6.1: Concepts of curriculum.

outcomes means checking what students have learned and how well they understood what was taught.

Additionally, the objectives of every curriculum offer precise rules and instructions for the final learning outcomes and concepts that students must grasp; nonetheless, the efficacy of the learning outcomes must be assessed. Undergraduate nursing courses are always evolving in response to the demands of the health sector due to the constant and quick changes in the health care industry.

CONCEPT

See **Figure 6.1.**

NATURE OF CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Systematic management is necessary for the appropriate establishment of standards based on the requirements and needs of both internal and external factors. The features that aid in data analysis are assessment, measurement, and evaluation.

These characteristics vary from one another according to the method used in the development of a curriculum.

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Measurement

Measurement is the process of assigning numbers to represent student achievement according to certain rules.

—Grundlund

Quantifying the elements in the curriculum design is the procedure known as measuring. Stated differently, measurement refers to the numerical data that is utilized to assess the variation in quality or degree. For instance, the student's accomplishment score, weight, length, GCS, and pain score.

Assessment

Assessment is the process of collecting and analyzing information to understand and improve learning.

The more general word for measuring the quantitative and qualitative components of curriculum is assessment. It is the procedure utilized to assess a student's performance and progress. Assessment can be in a nonwritten fashion to structured assessment of the student.

Evaluation

Evaluation can be defined as the process to speculate the teaching learning experiences. Good evaluation needs proper collection of data for deriving conclusions. Evaluation is a term that is used in a variety of ways, often with imprecise and overlapping meanings **(Lawton, 1973)**. It is much wider than that of measurement.

Curriculum evaluation refers to the process of studying the merit or worth of some aspect, or the whole of a curriculum. Depending on the way in which the term curriculum is defined, the focus or objects of curriculum evaluation could include

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curriculum design, learning environment, instruction process, resources and materials used in instructional process.

Curriculum evaluation is the formal determination of the quality, effectiveness, or value of a program, product, project, process, objective or curriculum (Worthen and Sanders, 1987).

Curriculum evaluation is defined as a process or cluster of processes that people perform in order to gather data that will enable them to decide whether to accept, change, or eliminate something—the curriculum in general or an educational textbook in particular (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998).

PURPOSES OF EVALUATION

- **To set appropriate goals:** Evaluation is essential to set appropriate objectives to achieve the quality of programs. The preparation of objectives is regarded to be the first and the foremost step in the formulation of objectives in curriculum development. To accomplish this within the allotted period, the plan needs to be precise and time-bound.

  Steven and Fallows (2008) assert that in order to guarantee both the effective completion of the curriculum and the attainment of the maximum possible outcome, it is critical that the plan be **clear, focused, and practically oriented**. The objective should assess cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills.
- **To determine the appropriate criteria to measure the outcome:** A methodical assessment can give program managers proof of a program's advantages and disadvantages for better teaching and learning techniques, experience value, and professional competency.
- **To ensure the quality of the program:** Curriculum evaluation helps to achieve quality in the field of nursing and provides appropriate teaching learning methods.

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Nursing curriculum evaluation is a crucial procedure that guarantees nursing curricula are created and implemented to satisfy the demands of the public, the profession, and students.

- **To obtain data that will require modifications:** "In order to ensure that nursing students receive the highest quality of instruction, it is essential that nurses, nurse educators, and healthcare administrators critically examine and systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the nursing curriculum." This ensures that nursing students have the most up-to-date information and abilities to fulfil their duties. Planning and implementation of suitable activities for learning:
  - A high impact learning experience comprises of a collection of similar traits shared by all the learning activities, regardless of their location or timing.
  - They are organized beforehand.
  - The students actions which include active, real-world learning are the main focus of attention.
- **To provide feasibility and effectiveness:** The lack of high-quality studies make it difficult to determine whether nursing curricula from rich countries are appropriate or feasible to introduce into poor nations. Tailoring a country's curriculum to a culturally or economically diverse country by taking into account local, regional, and worldwide experience is probably a more practical and effective method.
- **To judge the effectiveness of the curriculum:** A crucial component in assessing the quality of a program is outcome evaluation for nursing programs. The first step in improving program outcomes should be for nursing faculty to analyze and identify contributing factors, identify underlying difficulties, and create targeted action plans using evidence-based techniques.

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- **To provide accountability to the stakeholders:** An increasing number of higher education institutions are realizing that they must promote their programs, which includes evaluating them and informing stakeholders of the findings to assure program quality. Curriculum review can also assist community stakeholders in identifying areas for improvement within their district or school and creating plans to solve those issues. Involving community stakeholders in curriculum development through curriculum review can increase their sense of ownership and involvement with the educational system.
- **To analyze the strength and weakness:** Validating that a nursing program complies with the standards of the sector is crucial while appraising it. For instance, students are able to assess their courses based on a range of factors, including the standard of instruction, the curriculum's applicability, and the accessibility of resources. By using this data to enhance the curriculum, it will be possible to guarantee that students receive a high-quality education that fits their needs.

BENEFITS OF EVALUATION OF CURRICULUM IN NURSING

- Improves the learner's satisfaction by improving the teaching-learning process, determines the level of skills periodically.
- Faculty members may increase awareness and analyze the number of objectives achieved.
- Expand their knowledge in designing and formulate appropriate plan of action.
- Recommend practical aspects of learning and assess the trend in performance in learning.
- Augments the sense of empowerment and quality control in nursing.

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- Refines according to the needs of the society.
- Encourages students to develop a sense of discipline.
- Helps the student to acquire positive attitude and efficient skills.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EVALUATION

- Evaluation is an ongoing process. It is not confined to particular period at the process of teaching and learning.
- It is holistic in nature. It involves behavioral modifications as a part of teaching.
- It covers all the aspects of learning.
- It involves formulating goals, determine the progress and modification of the standard objectives.

TYPES OF CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Curriculum evaluation in nursing is an essential aspect of maintaining the quality and relevance of nursing education programs. These evaluations are designed to assess various elements of the curriculum, from its development and implementation to its outcomes and overall impact on nursing practice. In this detailed exploration, into different types of curriculum evaluation in nursing, highlighting the purpose, methods, and significance of each.

1. Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation is a process that occurs during the development or implementation of a nursing curriculum. Its primary purpose is to provide continuous feedback to improve the curriculum, ensuring that it aligns with educational goals and standards.

- **Focus groups:** Bringing together a representative sample of stakeholders, including faculty, students, and healthcare

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professionals, to discuss and provide insights into the curriculum's strengths and weaknesses.

- **Surveys:** Distributing surveys to collect quantitative data on the perceptions and experiences of students and faculty regarding the curriculum.
- **Observations:** Conducting observations in the classroom and clinical settings to assess how well the curriculum is being implemented.
- **Significance:** Formative evaluation is crucial for identifying areas of improvement in real-time, allowing educators to make adjustments and refinements to enhance the curriculum's effectiveness. It fosters a continuous improvement cycle, ensuring that the curriculum remains responsive to evolving educational needs.

2. Summative Evaluation

- **Purpose:** Summative evaluation takes place at the end of a nursing education program, aiming to assess its overall effectiveness and whether it has achieved its stated objectives. This evaluation type is essential for making informed decisions about the program's continuation, modification, or discontinuation.
- **Final exams:** Administering comprehensive final exams to assess students' knowledge and understanding of the key concepts covered in the curriculum.
  - *Standardized tests:* Implementing standardized tests that compare the performance of nursing students against a national or international standard.
- **Clinical assessments:** Evaluating students' clinical skills and competencies through structured assessments in healthcare settings.
- **Capstone projects:** Reviewing and assessing capstone projects that demonstrate students' ability to integrate

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theoretical knowledge into practical applications. The capstone project is a unique opportunity to carry out a project as independent group research in order to device an innovative solution for a real world problem.

- **Significance:** Summative evaluation provides a holistic view of the nursing education program's overall success. It informs stakeholders about the attainment of learning outcomes and contributes to decisions regarding program accreditation and continuous improvement.

3. Outcome-based Evaluation

- **Purpose:** Outcome-based evaluation focuses on the tangible results and impacts of the nursing education program. It assesses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired by students and evaluates how well graduates perform in real-world healthcare settings.
- **Standardized tests:** Utilizing standardized tests to measure the knowledge and cognitive skills of nursing graduates.
- **Clinical performance evaluations:** Assessing the clinical competencies of graduates through evaluations conducted by healthcare professionals in real clinical settings.
  - *Surveys of employers or graduates:* Gathering feedback from employers or graduates to assess how well the education program prepared students for their roles in the healthcare workforce.
- **Significance:** Outcome-based evaluation provides concrete evidence of the nursing education program's impact on students and their subsequent performance in the professional field. It helps in demonstrating accountability and ensuring that the program is meeting the needs of the healthcare industry.

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4. Process Evaluation

- **Purpose:** Process evaluation assess how well the nursing curriculum is being implemented. It focuses on the quality of instruction, the effectiveness of resources, and the overall learning environment.
- **Observations:** Conducting regular observations of classroom sessions, clinical instruction, and other teaching activities to assess the quality of instruction.
- **Interviews:** Interviewing faculty, students, and administrators to gather qualitative insights into the teaching methods, support systems, and overall learning experience.
- **Surveys:** Distributing surveys to collect feedback on the perceived quality of instruction, the relevance of materials, and the effectiveness of support services.
- **Significance:** Process evaluation is instrumental in identifying areas for improvement in the implementation of the curriculum. By examining the teaching methods, faculty effectiveness, and the learning environment, educators can make informed decisions to enhance the overall educational experience.

5. Input Evaluation

- **Purpose:** Input evaluation focuses on the resources and materials used in the nursing education program. This includes assessing faculty qualifications, facilities, and instructional materials.
- **Review of faculty credentials:** Examining the qualifications and expertise of faculty members to ensure they meet the standards for teaching in a nursing education program.
- **Assessment of physical resources:** Evaluating the adequacy of physical resources, such as classrooms,

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laboratories, and clinical facilities, to support effective learning.

- **Evaluation of instructional materials:** Reviewing the relevance and appropriateness of textbooks, online resources, and other instructional materials used in the curriculum.
- **Significance:** Input evaluation ensures that the nursing education program has the necessary resources to deliver high-quality education. By assessing faculty qualifications and the availability of physical and instructional resources, stakeholders can make informed decisions about resource allocation and improvement strategies.

6. Cost-benefit Analysis

- **Purpose:** Cost-benefit analysis involves assessing the cost-effectiveness of the nursing education program by comparing the costs of implementation with the benefits gained. This type of evaluation helps in making informed decisions about resource allocation and program sustainability.
- **Financial analysis:** Conducting a detailed financial analysis of the costs associated with program development, faculty salaries, infrastructure costs, and ongoing operational expenses.
  - *Comparison of costs and benefits:* Comparing the financial investment in the program with the benefits gained, such as improved student outcomes, higher employability, and overall program success.
- **Significance:** Cost-benefit analysis provides stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of the financial implications of the nursing education program. It helps in making decisions about resource allocation, budgeting, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the program.

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7. Responsive Evaluation

- **Purpose:** Responsive evaluation is an ongoing, dynamic process that adapts to the changing needs of the nursing profession and the healthcare environment. It emphasizes continuous feedback, stakeholder engagement, and flexibility in making adjustments to the curriculum based on emerging trends and challenges.
- **Stakeholder feedback sessions:** Engaging with stakeholders, including students, faculty, healthcare professionals, and employers, to gather continuous feedback on the curriculum.
- **Regular review committees:** Establishing committees or review boards to regularly assess the curriculum in light of evolving healthcare policies, technological advancements, and industry trends.
- **Flexibility in curriculum design:** Designing the curriculum with built-in flexibility to accommodate changes and updates based on emerging healthcare needs.
- **Significance:** Responsive evaluation ensures that the nursing education program remains relevant and responsive to the dynamic nature of healthcare. By continuously adapting to changes in the industry, the curriculum can better prepare students for the challenges they will face in their nursing careers.

CURRICULUM EVALUATION PLAN

- **The rationale of evaluation:** Rationale denotes the need for evaluation. It suggests the benefits and approach gained in the evaluation.
- **Objectives of the evaluation study:** Objectives are focused on the features of the standards which is set.

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- **Curriculum description:** It includes the philosophy, objectives, contents, procedures, learning methods and evaluation design.
- **Evaluation design:** Constraints under which evaluation is developed.
- Model used in the evaluation, sources of data collection and selection of evaluation design, data analyses techniques and budget
- **Evaluation report:** It includes the findings of the survey, the extent to which the objectives are met and recommendations for further study.

PROCESS OF EVALUATION

Learning outcomes describe what a learner is expected to know, understand and able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning (Vlasceanu, Grunberg and Parlea, 2007).

The steps involved in the process of evaluation are as follows **(Fig. 6.2)**.

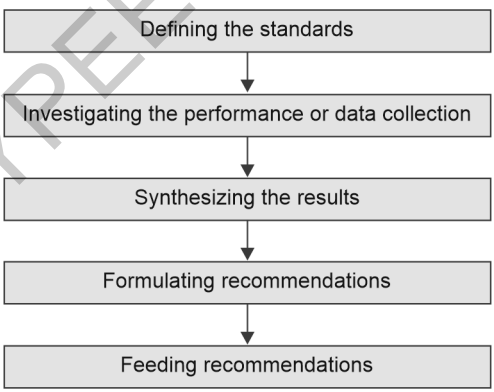

Fig. 6.2: Process of evaluation.

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"In our modern education system, we place too much emphasis on developing the brain and too little on educating the heart. True education must go beyond knowledge and skills; it must cultivate warm-heartedness and compassion."—**HH The 14th Dalai Lama**

A dedicated team of St. John's College of Nursing faculty wrote *Textbook of Nursing Education: Curriculum and Evaluation*, a comprehensive resource that offers novel perspectives on nursing education. This book, which was written for the betterment of future nurses in mind, includes guidelines to cultivate the skills and empathy necessary to navigate the complexity of contemporary healthcare.

Salient Features

- **In-depth curriculum design:** Explore innovative learning strategies that combine fundamental information with flexible, dynamic components to enable educators to equip learners for actual healthcare settings.
- **Bridging theory with practice:** This book offers practical applications that equip nurses to handle a range of patient requirements by clarifying the integration of theoretical knowledge and abilities.
- **Comprehensive evaluation strategies:** Featuring chapters on evaluating nursing students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, the book provides a detailed look at assessment methods that capture both cognitive and affective dimensions of nursing.
- **Standardized and nonstandardized tools:** Understand the benefits and limitations of various evaluation tools, from standardized testing to unique, nonstandardized approaches that emphasize clinical judgment and patient-centered care.
- **Effective clinical teaching methods:** Gain insights into teaching methods that go beyond the classroom, equipping learners with practical, compassionate, and collaborative skills essential for quality patient care.

Sr Sajitha Moothedan MSc(N) (Medical Surgical Nursing) has over 38 years of distinguished experience in the nursing profession, spanning both clinical and academic fields. She served for 12 years in clinical practice as Ward In-Charge, Assistant Nursing Superintendent and Nursing Superintendent at Holy Cross Hospital and St. John's Medical College Hospital, where she gained extensive hands-on expertise in patient care and hospital administration. Transitioning into academics, she dedicated 26 years to teaching, shaping generations of nursing professionals through her commitment to quality education and student mentoring. Out of these, she has held 13 years of leadership positions as Principal in Holy Cross College of Nursing, Adoor, and St. John's College of Nursing, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, where she contributed significantly to academic excellence, curriculum development, and institutional growth. Currently, she is serving as a Professor, continuing her mission of guiding, mentoring, and inspiring future nurses. Her rich blend of clinical practice, administrative leadership, and academic experience makes her an authoritative voice in nursing education and an esteemed contributor to this textbook.

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