

The Process of Designing the Curriculum

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to help you design curriculum by giving you a process to do so using the national standards or a set of other standards as basis for your work. In this chapter you will learn why long-range curriculum planning is important and you will be able to identify the essential parts of a curriculum guide and what needs to be included in each part.

OUTCOMES

- Distinguish the task of curriculum planning from unit and lesson planning.
- Identify the parts of a good curriculum guide and what should be in each part.
- Explain the role of context in making curriculum decisions.
- Identify the characteristics of a good curriculum guide in terms of the relationships between the parts.

In today's educational climate, a lot of the decisions about what students should learn in a program are being guided by work at the national and state levels. These guidelines are in the form of national and state standards that describe program outcomes. It is still the responsibility of individual districts and schools to design a program to achieve those outcomes.



Good curriculums take time to plan and are collaborative efforts. (© Ryan McVay/Getty Images)

Curriculum design is a process of thinking through how you want to organize what you want students to learn. Whereas lesson plans are what the teacher plans to do for the day and unit plans are what the teacher wants to do over several lessons or weeks, curriculum plans should be what the teacher wants students to learn over years. Sometimes teachers do yearly plans for a grade level that describe what students in a particular grade will learn over a year's time. These yearly plans can be separate documents from the curriculum guide or part of the curriculum guide. This relationship is described below:

Levels of Planning

Curriculum: A plan for grades K–12, K–5, 6–8, or 9–12.

Yearly Plan: A plan for a grade level over a year's time that describes the distribution of units over the year.

Unit Plan: A plan for a series of lessons in the same content area.

Lesson Plan: A plan for a lesson.

Theoretically, teachers at all school levels should coordinate their plans to develop a K–12 perspective for their physical education curriculums, which means

that there should be a coordinated district plan for a K–12 physical education program. Sometimes the district plan is broader in scope and lacks specifics, which are then left to school levels or individual schools. More often physical education curriculums are planned for a school level (elementary, middle, and high school). In most school districts that means that the elementary curriculum is planned for grades K–5, the middle school curriculum for grades 6–8 (or sometimes junior high school grades 7–9), and the high school curriculum for grades 9–12.

Planning should begin with decisions about the curriculum. All other levels of planning should then be consistent with the curriculum decisions that are made. Curriculum planning is one of the most important and perhaps most neglected responsibilities of the physical education teacher. Finding time to chart a course and struggling with big issues involved in the curriculum decision-making process is not easy. Not finding the time is the equivalency of embarking on a trip without really knowing where you are going. One reason that curriculum planning is important is because it makes yearly, lesson, and unit planning easier. The more elaborate the curriculum plan the less time we have to spend deciding what it is that we want to teach today or next month. A more important reason for curriculum planning to be done well is that it puts all those lessons and units into a perspective that makes explicit why we want students to experience particular content. In this respect it acts as a rudder, setting the direction to a larger goal.

The Curriculum Guide

Most practitioners will be involved in a curriculum project that asks them to develop a curriculum document that is a course of study for their subject area. Often this document is called a *curriculum guide*. The curriculum guide usually includes the following:

1. A statement of philosophy that describes the purpose of your program and the rationale for including your program in the school curriculum.
2. The *specific goals of your program* drawn from your philosophy and your understanding of your students that describe the skills, knowledge, and dispositions you want your students to have when they leave your program.
3. A *sequence of performance indicators/objectives/outcomes* by grade level that take the learner from where they are at the beginning of your program to the specific goals you have established for the end of your program.
4. A *content framework* that organizes your program objectives by content area into units or themes and describes what will be taught in each grade.
5. A *yearly block plan* for a grade level that describes what content area will be taught and when throughout the school year.
6. An assessment plan that will be used to determine if the program goals have been achieved (Chapter 9).

Education programs have an intent, which means that educational experiences are selected to accomplish specific purposes that are identified as outcomes ahead of time. A lot of the work developing a curriculum guide involves specifying program outcomes at different levels of specificity, beginning with program purposes that are broad,

general statements about what a program should accomplish, and ending with specific objectives for units of instruction that are actually measurable. These levels of intent should be consistent with each other, meaning that if you have a purpose, the objectives that you select for your units of instruction should be consistent with that purpose. *Consistency* in all levels of the curriculum plan is one of the most difficult and one of the most important characteristics of a good curriculum. Physical educators often identify lofty purposes for their programs, but identify goals for their programs and write objectives for their units that would not accomplish those purposes.

Most schools are asked to use a set of national and/or state standards to plan and conduct their programs. The national and state standards provide the teacher with a set of outcomes that should be achieved at the end of a program. They also describe the outcomes or a description of the content that should be achieved at the end of selected grade levels in the curriculum. Most state standards use the national standards either exclusively or in some variation. It is important to realize that standards are not curriculum. These materials provide the teacher with a good base, describing outcomes for a program without dictating the way to get there. The curriculum guide that you develop will be a plan for how you get there. As each of the curriculum guide sections is discussed below, a special emphasis will be placed on how to use the national standards (or state standards) to develop your curriculum.

Step I: Developing a Philosophy Statement

What are the purposes of my program?

Why do I think these purposes are worth including in the school program?

How are these purposes best accomplished in the context of my school with my students?

The philosophy statement of the curriculum should describe the purposes of your program and defend those purposes in terms of their inclusion as a school program. The previous chapter introduced many diverse positions on what is most important for physical education to accomplish as a school program. The philosophy statement of the curriculum document requires that teachers designing the curriculum take a position on those issues. In this respect a planned curriculum represents a value position. The curriculum plan selects from all those potential program purposes those that are actually going to be achieved in a specific program. What should be included in a philosophy statement is described below:

The Philosophy Statement

Should include:

- What you think the purposes of your program are.
- Why you think these purposes are worth including in a school program.
- How you think these purposes are best accomplished in the context of your school with your students.

A sample statement of philosophy and program aims is described in Appendix A.

A Time for Reflection

Although you will probably modify and further develop your philosophy statement many times in your career, you should begin to think through the answers to the questions above. Write a brief philosophy statement using the statement in Appendix A as a guide. It is not important that you agree with the philosophy statement in the text. What is important is that you are clear on what you believe to be important, can defend what you say, and can designate a program that is consistent with your beliefs.

Although there is no right or wrong position in terms of these issues, where there is national or state consensus on what should be taught in a program, teachers are normally obligated to work within that framework. In today's education climate, teachers are expected to teach toward the national or state standards and accept the idea that developing a physically active lifestyle is the major goal of a good physical education program.

The Statement of Philosophy and the National Standards. The purpose of physical education as described in the national standards is to *develop a physically active lifestyle* (2004). If you support this idea as the major goal of your program, you will then have to describe in your philosophy statement why you think developing a physically active lifestyle is an important goal for your school program. Rationale and support for this goal is now abundant in the literature and revolves around several factors:

- Next to smoking, lack of physical activity is now the single most prevalent cause of chronic disease.
- Physical education programs are the only programs in the school curriculum that have this goal as the primary goal.
- The school physical education program is required and will reach all children over their developing years.
- Education for a lifetime of physical activity requires the development of skills, attitudes, and knowledge.

Although the rationale described above should be sufficient to justify your program's inclusion in the school curriculum, a concern for competence in the academic areas now dominates the criteria for inclusion and support used in many schools. Teachers may want to add to their rationale:

- Students who achieve more academically are more fit.
- Students learn better when they are healthy.

When you accept developing a physically active lifestyle and the state or national standards as the purposes of your program, you will also have to take a position on how those purposes are best accomplished in the context of your school and your students. You will need to describe what you consider to be the best

way to give students the skills, knowledge, and dispositions they need to lead a physically active lifestyle. Your perspective on how to accomplish the purposes of your program is an opportunity for you to describe your approach to the content of physical education and how to organize the content of your program to accomplish your purpose(s).

Your statement of philosophy should also describe your approach to developing a physically active lifestyle. You will want to take a position on many of the issues described in Chapter 2 on how best to develop a physically active life style, such as:

- What is the role of skill development in motor skills?
- What is your approach to fitness and lifestyle issues?
 - Physical training
 - Lifestyle approaches
 - Developing fitness
 - Maintaining fitness
 - Affective dispositions
- How much and what kind of knowledge do students need?
- What is physical education's contribution to the personal development of students?
- Is your approach to physical education a health approach or quality of life issue?
- How much responsibility do you want to take for what students do outside of the physical education class?

Context-Specific Factors in Long-Term Planning. Sometimes context-specific factors are included as a separate section of your guide and sometimes they will be incorporated in the philosophy section or goals section of your guide. In this section you will include factors specific to the needs and interests of the students in your situation. You need to have a clear idea of where your students are, where you want them to be, and how best to get them there. You will want to consider students':

- Prior experiences.
- Social and cultural backgrounds.
- Ability in the content you want to teach.
- Interests.

You can obtain this information from a variety of sources, including student records; information on the school available from the state department of education; teachers who have worked with students prior to you teaching them, including teachers at other school levels; and student surveys that you do with your students.

You will also want to consider the context of your teaching situation in terms of the amount of time that you have with students in your program and what you can realistically accomplish in that amount of time. You may want to do all that the national standards say a good program should do, but realistically you do not have the time to meet these standards. One of the more difficult decisions that teachers have to make is to prioritize what they think is the most important to do given limited program time. The decision often-times involves having to choose between good alternatives and having to decide between doing a few things really well or many things with a limited level of achievement. Your philosophy statement should articulate these decisions and all of these issues will be important to resolve before you determine what the goals are for your program and how you intend to develop those goals in your program.

Step 2: Developing the Goals of Your Program

What should students know and be able to do as a result of (at the end of) my program?

The goals for your program are what you expect students to know and be able to do as a result of your program. They are the exit outcomes of your program. They should describe the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that you want your students to have when they leave your program and outcomes that you think you can reach with *every* student. The idea of every student is important here because there is a tendency to write goals that are directional or “lofty” that perhaps only a few students in your program can accomplish. The idea of every student commits you to writing goals that you think you can get every student to reach.

The best situation would be for goals to be written for a K–12 curriculum, in which case they would describe what students should be able to do when they leave high school. If your curriculum is being written for an elementary or middle school program, the specific goals should describe what students should be able to do when they leave the fifth grade or eighth grade, or the last grade for which your school is responsible.

Examples:

High School: Students should be competent in at least two different movement activities.

Middle School: Students should be able to keep a ball going back and forth across the net in a net game.

Elementary School: Students should be able to demonstrate mature form in several throwing and striking patterns.

The level of goal specificity is sometimes problematic. While it is important to get as specific as you can, you don’t want to end up with endless lists of goals

that make planning difficult and lose the meaning of what you are trying to do. Most goals are not written in a form that can be measured directly. That means that you cannot measure competence in two movement activities without first knowing what those movement activities might be and defining what competence might be in that activity. You cannot measure whether a student can keep a ball going back and forth with a partner in a net activity without knowing what net activity you are referring to. Writing goals at this level of specificity has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that it provides a framework for what you will do at each grade level leading up to the outcome without tying you into accomplishing the goal in a narrow way. Broader goals are useful when curriculums are written for more than one school because they allow teachers to accomplish goals in different ways. For example, a program can include lots of different movement activities in the high school curriculum but expects competence in only two. Different schools can decide what those two movement forms should be. The disadvantage of a broader level of specificity is that it puts off decisions as to exactly what content to include and how to measure those outcomes for the next level of planning.

Developing Goals Using the National Standards. When you are using the national standards for a K–12 program, your specific goals are the national standards. These are the outcomes of your program.

Standard 1: Demonstrates *competency* in motor skills and movement patterns to perform a variety of physical activities.

Standard 2: Demonstrates understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics as they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.

Standard 3: Participates regularly in physical activity.

Standard 4: Achieves and maintains a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.

Standard 5: Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.

Standard 6: Values physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.

You will want to decide on:

- The most important goals to achieve in physical education.
- Whether or not you want to add any additional goals.
- Whether or not these goals are achievable for your program.
- Whether you think these goals need to be modified to meet the unique needs of your students.

The national standards are exit goals for a high school program. If you are writing your curriculum for the middle school or elementary school level, you

would have to decide how far you think you can get in your program at your level toward the accomplishment of these goals. The material written in the standards text for each grade level will help you make these decisions. The exit goals for a K–5 elementary program would be those appropriate for the end of the fifth grade. The exit goals for a 6–8 middle school program would be those appropriate for the end of the eighth grade.

Step 3: Selecting and Sequencing Objectives/Outcomes for Grade Levels

What objectives should students meet at the end of each grade level that will take me to my goals?

Once you have decided on the goals for your program, which are exit outcomes for the end of your program, you will have to sequence objectives that will take you to those outcomes. For instance, if you want fifth graders to be able to strike a ball back and forth with a racket and a partner over a low net without losing control, what does that mean students in your kindergarten should be doing? The following sequence of objectives is one perspective on what a progression of goals over K–5 grades might look like for the outcome: *With a partner, continuously strike a small ball back and forth with a racket over a low net without losing control.*

Kindergarten: Strike a balloon to keep it up in the air without it hitting the ground.

First Grade: Strike a large light ball against the wall with the hand continuously in control.

Second Grade: Strike a balloon with a paddle to keep it up in the air without it hitting the ground.

Third Grade: Tap a small ball up in the air and down continuously with a racket without losing control.

Fourth Grade: Tap a small ball continuously against the wall with a racket without losing control.

Fifth Grade: **With a partner, continuously strike a small ball back and forth with a racket over a low net without losing control.**

A high school goal might be that students should participate in physical activity on a regular basis by the time they graduate from high school. If you were planning a K–12 program, what do you think a good outcome for kindergarten should be in relation to this goal? If you were planning just the high school program, what should the ninth graders be able to do in respect to this outcome?

At this level of planning you are asked to describe the outcomes by grade level that will take you to your goals. If you are working with a K–12 program and you want students to be competent at movement activities, then you might think about

these ideas as outcomes for different grade levels that would lead you to students being competent at movement activities. The following examples for a few grade levels illustrate the point:

Kindergarten: Use fundamental locomotor patterns in open ways by changing the direction, level, force, pathway, and body/space relationships of the pattern.

Fourth Grade: Demonstrate mature form in a variety of receiving and sending actions used in both team and individual sport activities.

Seventh Grade: Demonstrate competence in the specific patterns of movement activities and sports in modified situations.

If at the high school level you wanted students to be able to design a personal fitness program, you might think about these ideas as appropriate objectives for grade levels that precede the high school.

First Grade: Identify a variety of sport and lifestyle activities that make your heart beat faster.

Third Grade: Identify at least one exercise or activity that can be used to develop each of the fitness components.

Seventh Grade: Interpret a personal level of fitness based on fitness scores and logs of physical activity kept over a period of time.

In each of these examples you are asked to identify what you think students need to know and be able to do through each grade level in order for students to reach your goal at the end of the curriculum. In this sense, the sequence of objectives represents a sequence of objectives for a year for a grade level for a particular goal. When you have finished you should be able to see a plan for accomplishing your goal that is sequenced across grade levels. (See Box 3.1.)

Sometimes this section of the curriculum document is called a *scope and sequence* of content. When it is done appropriately it should result in a chart that describes the objectives for how to achieve each goal across the top (columns) and all of the objectives for a grade level going down (rows). When the scope and sequence of objectives is done well, the objectives across the grade levels are progressive, achievable, and developmentally appropriate for the students at each grade level.

Sequencing Your Outcomes by Grade Level Using the National Standards. If you are using the national standards as your source for grade level objectives, the grade level objectives will be either:

- The emphases and sample benchmarks for each grade level as described in the 1995 version of the standards;
- The sample outcomes as described in the 2004 version of the standards;
- The performance indicators as described in the assessment materials designed for the national standards; or
- What you think is the most important for students to learn in this grade consistent with the standards you have adopted or adapted.

Box 3.1 Planning Objectives for a Goal Across Grade Levels

Goal: Participate Regularly in Physical Activity

Kindergarten Objectives:

- Identify the effects of vigorous activity on the speed of your heart and breathing.
- Identify activities that make your heart beat faster.
- Do something after school that makes your heart beat faster.
- Do something at recess that makes your heart beat faster.

First-Grade Objectives:

- Identify muscular strength as a component of being healthy.
- Identify the activities that make you strong.
- Identify activities you like to do that are physically active.
- Identify lifestyle activities that you like to do that are physically active.
- Participate in physical activity at recess and after school.

Second-Grade Objectives:

- Identify the components of fitness and why they are important to being physically active.
- Identify activities you like to do that are physically active.
- Identify lifestyle activities that you like to do that are physically active.
- Participate in physical activity at recess and after school.
- Identify someone you know who is not physically active and do something physically active with them.
- Select a skill to improve and do it on a regular basis to get better.

Third-Grade Objectives:

- Describe the health benefits of being physically active.
- Explore and select a community activity that involves physical activity.

- Identify at least one physical activity associated with each component of fitness.
- Identify the physical activities that are most enjoyable.
- Participate in physical activity at recess and after school.
- Change one lifestyle pattern to improve physical activity.

Fourth-Grade Objectives:

- Identify several exercises and lifestyle activities associated with each component of fitness.
- Match each item on a fitness test to a fitness component.
- Participate in a physical activity outside of school on a regular basis.
- Change one lifestyle pattern to improve physical activity.

Fifth-Grade Objectives:

- Use personal fitness data to determine a personal level of fitness.
- Identify several ways (exercise as well as other physical activities) that can be used to develop a component of fitness.
- Identify a physical activity or sport to get better at.
- Participate in a physical activity outside of school on a regular basis.
- Change one lifestyle pattern to improve physical activity.

Sixth-Grade Objectives:

- Identify opportunities in the school and community for physical activity.
- Select a fitness component for improvement and develop a plan to improve that component.
- Keep a personal log of activity patterns for a week.
- Participate in an organized activity that is physically active.

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Seventh-Grade Objectives:

- Select a fitness component for improvement and develop a plan to improve that component.
- Keep a personal log of activity patterns for a week and evaluate personal physical activity participation.
- Participate in an organized activity that is physically active.
- Determine personal interests in physical activity.

Eighth-Grade Objectives:

- Identify long-term benefits of physical activity.
- Set personal fitness goals with the help of the teacher and determine a plan to achieve those goals using both exercise and lifestyle activities.
- Participate in an organized activity that is physically active.

High School Objectives:

- Know how and where to access opportunities for participation in physical activity in the community.
- Demonstrate the etiquette of participation in a variety of activities.
- Be able to select equipment and know how to participate safely in a variety of physical activities.
- Independently assess personal fitness, set personal fitness goals, and develop a plan to achieve those goals.
- Identify the physical components (fitness) necessary for participation in a variety of activities.
- Participate in an organized activity that is physically active.
- Identify one lifestyle change that has been made to increase physical activity.

Examples of grade level objectives for Standard 1 and Standard 3, indicating the level of specificity needed to describe outcomes by one grade level and two standards, are described below:

Examples of Grade Level Objectives for Standard 1 and Standard 3
Standard 1: Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns to perform a variety of physical activities.

Second-Grade Objectives:

- Demonstrate mature form in skipping, hopping, galloping, and sliding.
- Combine locomotor patterns in time with music.
- Combine traveling, balancing, and rolling into a smooth sequence.
- Toss and catch a small ball.
- Strike a ball into the air consecutively with a paddle.

Standard 3: Participates regularly in physical activity.

Eighth-Grade Objectives:

- Identify personal goals for participation in physical activity.
- Participate regularly in some kind of physical activity.
- Participate in one new activity outside of physical education class.

Establishing objectives related to your program goals (standards) for each grade level is a very critical step in curriculum design. When you have finished you should have a set of objectives under each one of your goals for each grade level. This set of objectives is what you hope to accomplish in a year's program. If you have done

Box 3.2 Second-Grade Program Objectives

Standard One:

Demonstrate mature form in locomotor skills.
 Demonstrate smooth transitions between combinations of movements (locomotor skills and manipulative patterns).
 Use movement concepts to vary patterns.

Standard Two:

Use feedback to improve performance.
 Identify the critical elements of basic movement patterns.
 Apply movement concepts to a variety of basic skills.

Standard Three:

Experience and express pleasure in physical activity.

Standard Four:

Engage in sustained physical activity that causes an increased heart rate and heavy breathing
 Recognize the physiological signs of moderate to heavy physical activity.

Standard Five:

Work cooperatively with another to complete an assigned task.
 Apply rules, procedures, and safe practices with little or no reinforcement.
 Play and cooperate with others regardless of personal differences.

Standard Six:

Try new activities.

your work carefully, this set of objectives should represent a *developmental plan* for accomplishing each standard across the grades in your program. When you have finished, the product should be developmentally sound, which means that the outcomes should be appropriate outcomes for a grade level, and the process of achieving those outcomes from one year to the next should lead to achievement of your goals/standards. An example of a set of objectives across standards is provided in Box 3.2.

Step 4: Selecting an Organizing Framework for Your Content

How can I best conceptually organize the content of my program?

Once you have determined what you want students at each grade level to do in relation to your goals, you will want to select an organizing framework that you think best facilitates the delivery of that content. An *organizing framework*, sometimes called a content framework, is a conceptual scheme to organize the objectives that you have for your program by content area into units or themes. In this step of designing your curriculum, you will place your grade level objectives into the content framework used for a grade level. Different programs will be comfortable with different content frameworks for organizing their curriculums.

In one sense the organizing framework is a way to help you describe what you will name your units of instruction. Often the content of physical education is organized into a framework at two levels. The first level is broader and describes the *kinds* of units that will be included. The second level describes the units or themes that will be taught under each larger heading. The following examples in Box 3.3 describe frameworks that utilize two levels of specificity for the elementary, middle, and high school level. For example, the first level at the high school

Box 3.3 Organizing Frameworks for Curriculum—Sample Units*

High School Framework	Middle School Framework	Elementary School Framework
Team Sports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Basketball ■ Volleyball ■ Soccer ■ Lacrosse 	Net Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pickle ball ■ Tennis ■ Volleyball 	Locomotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Traveling on the feet ■ Combining patterns ■ Using locomotor patterns with other skills
Individual Sports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tennis ■ Golf ■ Bowling ■ Archery 	Invasion Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ultimate Frisbee ■ Basketball ■ Soccer 	Educational Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tossing and catching ■ Striking with a paddle ■ Soccer
Individual Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rock climbing ■ Canoeing ■ Tai Chi 	Individual Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Project Adventure 	Educational Dance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locomotor patterns to different rhythms ■ Contrasting quick and slow movement ■ Folk dance
Aquatics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Intermediate swimming 	Individual Sports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Archery ■ Golf 	Educational Gymnastics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Traveling on different body parts ■ Balancing in different ways ■ Rolling ■ Combining traveling, balancing, and rolling
Fitness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Weight training ■ Aerobic dance 	Dance	Fitness and Physical Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identifying components of fitness ■ Awareness of personal preferences
Dance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Line dance ■ Social dance 	Aquatics	
	Fitness	

*The units identified under each broad content area are not meant to be inclusive, but rather samples of units that might be taught under a particular heading.

level would be team sports and the second level basketball. The first level at the elementary level would be locomotion and the second level traveling on the feet.

Most high school curriculums and many middle school curriculums use some variation of an activity framework to organize their content. At these school levels the teacher decides which content units will be taught at which grade levels. There is far more variation in the type of framework used at the elementary level. Because of the great variation in the needs of kindergarten students and fifth-grade students, the framework may change for different grade levels. For instance, in the example above it would not be appropriate to include locomotion as a content area for fifth graders but it might be appropriate to begin to teach skills for specific sports such as basketball. Later chapters in this text will help you sort out the options that you have for selecting a framework for different school levels.

Box 3.4 Content Framework for Second Grade

Locomotion

Develop mature patterns and combinations of patterns in all locomotor skills.

Educational Gymnastics

Combine balancing and traveling actions.

Change the dynamics of rolling (speed/direction/body shape, etc.).

Move onto and off of small apparatus using different parts of the body.

Educational Dance

Contrast quick and slow movements.

Use a variety of body parts to link movements.

Use changes of body shape in sequences.

Create short sequences of action words with a partner.

Perform simple group dances with a partner.

Educational Games

Throw a ball for distance using a mature pattern.

Toss and catch with a partner.

Strike a ball with a paddle/bat/club for control.

Kick a stationary ball for a distance.

The content framework for a grade level should reflect the content framework that you will use for your entire program. The content framework for a year's program will actually represent the units that you teach in that year for a grade level. Box 3.4 describes a content framework for second grade. You will notice that the teacher has decided to teach 13 units during this school year represented in four different content areas.

Step 5: Developing a Yearly Block Plan

How long will it take me to accomplish the objectives I have for this unit?

When in the school year is the best time to teach this unit?

Once you have decided on the units that you will teach and have placed your objectives in your units, you will need to decide when you will teach these units over the school year and for how long you will teach each unit. This decision should be made relative to the questions:

- How long will it take me to accomplish the objectives I have for this unit?
- When in the school year is the best time to teach this unit?
 - How can this unit be scheduled with other units other teachers in the program might be teaching?
 - Where should this unit be placed relative to other units in the yearly program?

The *yearly block plan* describes the units you will teach at what times during the school year for a particular grade. You will need to look at the objectives that have been drawn directly from program goals as well as any additional and more specific objectives you may have for a unit and decide how much time it will take for all

students to learn these objectives. You will also have to decide where to best place this unit in the school year.

How Much Time Do You Need? One of the more difficult decisions to make in designing a yearly program is to make a decision about how much time it takes for students to really learn the content we want them to learn. There is more and more evidence from research both in the academic areas as well as in physical education that we are simply underestimating how long it takes for us to get all students to meet the objectives that we have for them. Learning is produced with repetition and overlearning. Consider for example how many times a student has to throw and catch a ball before he or she can be considered competent at throwing and catching a ball. Learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior. Seeing students do something once does not mean that they have really learned what we want them to learn even though their performance at that time may be considered acceptable. If you come back after some time has passed and students still can exhibit the behavior you want them to learn, then you can be better assured that they have learned it. Building repetition and overlearning opportunities into your units adds time to the length of those units. Elementary programs may consider recycling units or revisiting units so that students may experience skills such as throwing or catching several times during the school year.

When students don't learn because you have not planned enough time to learn, you either have to change your objectives for your unit or change the amount of time you are willing to devote to that content. If, for instance, you planned on taking your eighth-grade middle school students to a level where they can *use a zone defense in a three-on-three basketball game* and you don't have time in your unit to get to that objective, then you may have to revise your unit objectives. What you can accomplish in your eighth-grade unit also has great implications for the ninth-grade program that may be anticipating receiving students with particular skills. If you find yourself increasing the amount of time you need in your units, you may have to go back to your curriculum framework and eliminate some units and objectives from your program.

Where to Place a Unit in the School Year. The yearly block plan also requires you to decide where in the school year you will place your unit. Many factors are considered in placing a unit, including those related to the seasons and weather in a particular area, the availability of equipment and facilities, holidays, community and school events, and school schedules.

Seasonal and Weather Conditions. Many units like soccer or Project Adventure will need to be taught outside. In more northern parts of the country, the time you can go outside in the school year is reserved for the fall and spring. In some southern states the time you can go outside and participate hard in physical activity is reserved for the winter because it is too hot at other times of year. Some geographical locations have a rainy season. All of these factors need to be considered when you teach a unit.

Availability of Equipment and Facilities. Some school districts share large equipment between schools. For instance, gymnastics equipment may only be available for a particular time in the school year, making the choice of when to teach that unit limited. Teachers who work in a department with other teachers will have to work out a schedule for who will teach an activity and where it will be taught. Indoor

teaching stations are often at a premium, particularly in large schools and middle schools. Making the best use of the teaching stations that you do have requires some long-term planning and organization so that the indoor stations don't sit empty for parts of the year and are overcrowded during other parts of the year. Some activities require very specialized space and others have more flexible requirements.

Holidays and Community Events. Holidays affect students in school. The week before winter vacation, Halloween, or Valentine's Day are particularly difficult times for teachers to get the full attention of elementary students. Many teachers plan accordingly by doing special units that use these events to their advantage, for example: doing creative dance with monsters and scary creatures during Halloween week or doing chasing and fleeing games that revolve around a Valentine theme for Valentine's Day.

Teachers may not have the gym for a week if voting takes place in a school on election day or if school pictures are going to be held in the gym. In some areas students take off from school when the state fair is in town. All of these factors should be considered when planning when your units will be taught so that you are prepared ahead of time and can use the program time that you do have to its greatest advantage.

School Schedules. All schools have a published schedule. Most divide the school year into quarters. In some high schools, or middle schools, students may only take physical education for a quarter or semester (two quarters in a row). At the end of each quarter teachers would be expected to give students a grade for physical education or do some kind of report to parents on the status of a student in physical education. Organizing your units so that you are culminating what you are teaching at the time grades are due would be important in these situations.

Relationship to Other Units in Your Curriculum. Another factor to consider relative to where to place a unit relative to the school year is the relationship of a unit to other units in the curriculum. If you want to teach students how to use



Some activities need to be planned as “seasonal activities.” (© liquidlibrary/
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Box 3.5 Elementary School and High School Yearly Block Plan

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: FIFTH GRADE

Week	# of Lessons	Unit Content Area
1, 2, 3	6	Educational games: Soccer
3, 4, 5	6	Educational dance: Using effort actions with a theme
6, 7, 8, 9	8	Educational gymnastics: Developing a partner routine using body shape concepts
9, 10, 11	6	Educational games: Paddle and racket skills
12, 13, 14	6	Educational dance: Line and folk dance
15, 16, 17, 18	8	Educational games: Basketball
19, 20	4	Educational games: Inline skating
21, 22, 23	6	Fitness concepts and lifestyle issues (bicycle)
24, 25, 26,	6	Educational games: Volleyball
27, 28, 29	6	Educational gymnastics: Apparatus routines
30, 31, 32	6	Educational games: Softball/baseball

HIGH SCHOOL YEARLY PLAN

Week	# of lessons	Unit Content Area
1	2	Orientation
1	3	Pre-test—fitness
2–18	48 (M-W-Fr)	Student selection of activity (#1)
2–18	32 (Tu–Th)	Fitness concepts
19–28	45	Student selection of activity (#2)
29–35	30	Student choice of activity (#3)
35	3	Post-testing and closure—fitness
36	2	Lockers and closure

Student Activity Choices (Students must have at least two different movement forms for the year)

Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
Soccer	Basketball	Gymnastics
Tennis	Volleyball	Baseball
Golf	Badminton	Football
Lacrosse	Bowling	Swimming
Backpacking	Aerobic dance	Line dance
Weight training	Weight training	Kayaking

offensive and defensive concepts for invasion types of games, you may want to teach units like soccer and basketball following each other so that the connection between them is more easily made by students. If you want to teach cardiorespiratory endurance in your fitness unit you may want to teach an activity that utilizes cardiorespiratory endurance at the same time. A sample yearly block plan is described in Box 3.5 for elementary and high school grade levels.

Step 6: Placing Objectives in Units

Where in the block plan will the objectives be taught?

The teacher uses a framework to determine the units that will be taught. Once the units are identified, the teacher then places the objectives of the program under each unit. The yearly plan and placing objectives in units often occur simultaneously in the planning process for obvious reasons. Teachers need to know what will go into a unit if they are to determine where and how much time the unit will take.

In the example using the goal *participate regularly in physical activity*, the logical place to put most of these objectives would seem to be the fitness units identified in each of the frameworks. However, it would be far more effective to consider this goal a continuous responsibility for all the units in the curriculum and to place many of the objectives encouraging outside class participation, fitness development, and an awareness of personal preferences for physical activity in other units as well. The unit objectives related to *participating regularly in physical activity* for a basketball unit might be:

1. Identify the location of opportunities to play basketball both as an informal recreational activity as well as on a team.
2. Describe how to select shoes and balls for participation in basketball.
3. Describe a strategy for conditioning for basketball.
4. Describe the benefits of participation in basketball.

In placing your objectives into a content framework, you will want to identify in what unit you will teach all of your objectives for the year. You will also want to consider that some objectives are best taught over several units in your program. Box 3.6 pulls out the locomotion unit of this framework from Box 3.4 and illustrates how the objectives are inserted into the unit. You will notice that the teacher has described the program objectives in rather specific terms. Describing what objectives go into what unit at this level of specificity will make unit planning much easier. In Box 3.6, critical learning experiences are also described to give the reader a good understanding of how the objectives would actually be delivered to the learners.

What Should Be and What Can Be—The Role of Context in Curriculum Planning

National and state standards are usually designed as “best case scenarios,” which means they are designed for programs that meet students, often and have good working conditions, including adequate equipment and facilities, lots of time with students, and small classes. Many teachers do not have these conditions. More often teachers at the elementary school level meet their students once or twice a week. Teachers at the middle school level meet their students every other day and teachers at the high school level have their students for one or two years.

Box 3.6 Placing Objectives into a Unit—Three-Week Unit on Locomotion

Week One:

Demonstrate mature form in each locomotor pattern.

Use locomotor patterns in combination with one another in general space.

Vary the pattern using space and effort movement concepts.

Identify critical elements of locomotor patterns.

Engage in sustained activity that causes heavy breathing.

Sample critical learning experiences:

1. Use a check sheet of process characteristics to do peer assessment of locomotor patterns.
2. Engage in sustained activity (five minutes) varying the speed, direction, type, and pathway of a locomotor pattern with smooth transitions.

Week Two:

Develop routines using locomotor patterns with small equipment.

Demonstrate smooth transitions between sequential motor tasks.

Work cooperatively with another to complete an assigned task.

Use feedback to improve performance.

Sample critical learning experiences:

1. Develop a sequence of three different locomotor patterns using hoops and hurdles that is the very best that you can do.

2. Teach your routine to a partner who is in some way different from yourself, demonstrating your ability to work together.
3. With your partner, provide feedback to another set of partners demonstrating your ability to both give good feedback to others and use feedback from others to improve your performance.

Week Three:

Use locomotor patterns effectively in gamelike conditions.

Recognize the physiological signs of increased activity.

Apply rules, procedures, and safe practices with little or no reinforcement.

Experience and express pleasure in physical activity.

Sample critical learning experiences:

1. Participate in chasing- and fleeing-type games. Check physiological characteristics of activity both before and after.
2. Invent a game that uses locomotor skills. Self-assessment of ability to follow the rules once they have been established.
3. At close of the unit, the teacher asks students to identify the activities they most enjoyed by putting a smiley face on the activity.

Although there is great similarity in the needs of students wherever they may be in the country, there are also some differences. Geographic region influences the types of physical activities that are important to a culture. Programs in Maine may need to consider more of an emphasis on winter activities while students in Florida focus on summer water sports. Students in rural areas may not have access to the activities available to students in urban areas. Community culture and student interest and access will play a role in the activities you choose to emphasize.

The most important factor affecting what you can accomplish in your program is going to be the amount of time that you have with students. The national standards were designed primarily for programs that meet with their students every day. If you do not meet your students every day, you will want to modify the objectives you select for each grade level and perhaps your goals so that they reflect what you can achieve with all your students in the time that you do have with them. In today's educational climate, the emphasis is on outcomes, what students learn. It is more important that students learn what you intend them to learn than it is for you to cover material. There are many things we think students should learn as part of a good physical education program. Making decisions about what they can learn in the time you have with them means that you will have to make some hard choices between good objectives. Curriculums that are effective in producing student learning have targeted accurately what they think students can learn in the time allotted.

What Characterizes a Good Curriculum Guide?

After you have finished all of the parts of a curriculum guide, it is useful to look at the guide and determine if the parts make sense as a whole. There are several characteristics that make up a good guide. One of the most important is to determine if the parts are *aligned* with each other. Are the purposes, goals, objectives, units, and assessment consistent with each other? Do they go together? For example, if you say your purpose is to develop a physically active lifestyle, can the goals and objectives of your program actually do this? Do you assess whether students are leading a physically active lifestyle? Do you address physically active lifestyles in any of your units?

For those programs that use the national standards or their state standards as their purpose and goals, the curriculum must not only be aligned in terms of all of its parts, but it must also be *aligned* with the standards. The sequence you use to get there should be progressive and developmentally appropriate, as the standards are developed from early grade levels to later grade levels. Programs are also more effective if many of the standards are *integrated* into all or most units. Content should be specific enough so that units can be easily designed from the objectives. Some guides also spell out specific learning experiences that are part of each unit.

The assessment of the curriculum will be discussed in Chapter 11. It is important to realize at this point that you will have to provide a way to assess your goals and objectives. Good guides not only suggest alternatives, they provide the assessment material the teacher will use to do the assessment.

In summary:

- Are the parts of the guide aligned with each other?
- Is the content aligned with the standards?
- Is the content specific enough to provide direct help for unit planning?
- Is the sequence progressive and developmentally appropriate over the years?
- Are assessment materials provided that assess the goals and objectives of the curriculum?

Box 3.7 Decisions to Be Made in Developing a Curriculum Guide

Step 1: Statement of Philosophy

- What are the purposes of my program?
- Why do I think these purposes are worth including in a school program?
- How are these purposes best accomplished in the context of my school with my students?.

Step 2: Specific Goals of Your Program

- What should students know and be able to do as a result of (at the end of) my program?

Step 3: Sequence of Objectives/Outcomes

- What objectives should students accomplish at each grade level that will take me to my goals?

Step 4: Content Framework

- How can I best conceptually organize the objectives I have for my program into content areas?

Step 5: Yearly Block Plan

- How long will it take me to accomplish the objectives I have for this unit?
- When in the school year is the best time to teach this unit?
 - How can this unit be scheduled with other units other teachers in the program might be teaching?
 - Where should this unit be placed relative to other units in the yearly program?

Step 6: Placing the Objectives into Units

- Where in the curriculum can I best teach an objective?

Step 7: Assessing the Curriculum

- How can I determine that the goals and objectives I have for my curriculum have been achieved (Chapter 9)?

The Decisions Involved in Developing the Curriculum Guide

Each of the parts of the curriculum guide has been explored in this chapter in terms of the decisions that the curriculum designer must make in order to plan an educational program to accomplish particular goals. This process is summarized in Box 3.7. Although the process appears to be a linear one, which means that it goes smoothly from step 1 to step 7, in practice it is not. For example, the process of developing objectives often makes program purpose clear. The process of doing a yearly plan often requires revisions in objectives or the framework we have chosen. Curriculum guide developers often find themselves moving back and forth from one section of the plan to another as they try to develop a consistent document that is a useful guide for developing an effective educational program.

Check Your Understanding

1. Why is long-term planning important and what are the consequences of not having a long-term plan?
2. What are the six parts of a curriculum guide?
3. What should be in a philosophy statement that begins the curriculum guide?
4. What questions should you ask to identify the goals of your program?

5. What is the relationship between goals and objectives?
6. What is meant by the idea of scope and sequence of content?
7. What is an organizing framework for curriculum? Give an example of a potential elementary school, middle school, and high school organizing framework.
8. What factors have to be considered in order to do a yearly plan for a grade level?
9. What contextual factors from a particular situation might influence what you do in your curriculum?

Suggested Reading

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by Design* (expanded 2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Sowell, E. (2004). *Curriculum: An Integrative Approach*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill.

