So you've developed a Great Course, Now what?

Tips for Developing a Curriculum

Now that you have developed a great course, it's time to further capitalize on your work by adapting the course content into a form which is usable by other institutions: a comprehensive curriculum. There are several advantages to disseminating your course. A well-designed, peer-reviewed curriculum is a scholarly product that will directly assist with academic promotion for most institutions. Having a curriculum on the AADPRT website will help in establishing your program as a content expert. Sharing the content allows others to benefit from your contribution and also evaluate the content and make suggestions to further strengthen the material. Although you may be an excellent psychiatrist, administrator and teacher, most psychiatrists have not had formal training in developing educational material and will need guidance regarding the elements of a comprehensive curriculum. The following information should be used as an introductory primer for those looking for ideas on how to structure their curriculum submission. The suggestions below should not be interpreted as a required template. Examining and comparing accepted curricula will also serve as an orientation to approaches for compiling your content in a manner which is easily disseminated.

For comprehensive curricula, the Curriculum Committee uses the following criteria:

> The following equally-weighted eight criteria will be used to judge submissions (scale 1-6):
>   1. Organization/Coherence of Curriculum (including a table of contents and introductory section that summarizes the various curricular components)
>   2. Comprehensiveness of Curriculum
>   3. Quality of Educational Materials
>   4. Innovation
>   5. Faculty Curriculum Guide (to help faculty implement the curriculum)
>   6. Evaluation Tools (for faculty to use to assess resident competence)
>   7. Bibliography
>   8. Adaptability /Portability (suitability for a variety of settings including programs with limited resources)

For a well-organized curriculum to serve as a reference, visit the AADPRT curricula page and view the following example: "Columbia Quality Improvement Curriculum" Melissa Arbuckle, MD, Columbia University.

The elements of your curriculum may be organized as follows:

1) **Title page** with the name of your course and all authors/affiliations, correspondence address, e-mail and phone number.

2) **Table of contents page**

3) **Introduction:** 2-5 paragraphs (or longer for a more well developed discussion) of background information introducing the importance and potential impact of the topic and the rationale for including it in the curriculum. It may be helpful to cite Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, (CMS), Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), Institute of Medicine (IOM), and/or American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) policies which support the need for your content. Reviewing the academic psychiatry literature for articles which have assessed the rates of use or perceived quality of existing

attempts to cover your content area may also serve to supply background context.

4) **Curriculum Overview**: 2-3 paragraphs describing your course. Is this a one hour weekly course over 12 weeks? What year of training is this curriculum directed towards? Is this a comprehensive approach with levels of content that span all four years of training and builds on information presented at prior levels? Is this a clinical experience, simulation, didactic presentation, discussion based workshop, or combination of methodologies? Is this course designed around a required text? At what point are outcomes assessed?

5) **Goals and Objectives**: By the end of this course, residents will develop the following, or be able to…
List all goals and objectives which apply, a minimum of three is probably reasonable. These may be framed in terms of resident knowledge, skills, and attitudes, or specific ACGME Milestones, or Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs). It is vital that goals and objectives be observable and measurable, and that the tools for evaluating the skills acquired be clear (see #8).

6) **Curriculum Outline:** This is essentially the syllabus for the course. At this point, you would list the title of each session, instructional materials, or provide a map or description of rotations or clinical experiences.

7) **Curriculum or Faculty Guide:** This is a well developed section with several paragraphs instructing the faculty person implementing your curriculum. This section may go through each session with information on how to run the session and presenter notes, discussion points, information to highlight, or general presentation/implementation strategies. *This is the section that is usually most incomplete in MCC submissions. It is vital that the guide be comprehensive and detailed enough so that faculty can easily use it to guide their teaching activities.*

8) **Evaluation Tools:** How are learners evaluated? Is there a pre- and post- test assessing knowledge skills and attitudes? If so, you should include this document in this section. Are the ACGME Milestones used as assessment outcomes? Are learners able to evaluate the quality of the course and

instruction? Are there observable behavioral changes following the course that can be measured? Your medical school may have an evaluation specialist who may be willing to help you design an evaluation tool. There are several examples available within posted curricula on the AADPRT website.

9) **Adaptability:** These curricula are evaluated based on their adaptability and portability. You should describe approaches others may use to integrate this content into their program. This is especially important if the curriculum is embedded in a specific clinical site. Include how programs without similar resources might adapt the curriculum. Modularity may make it easier for others to use.

10) **Innovation:** Similar to adaptability, these curricula are evaluated based on their innovation. You should describe the ways in which your approach incorporates innovation (new technologies, simulation, updated materials, approaches that have not yet been attempted, particularly effective methods, etc.) and how it is different from other available content.

11) **Acknowledgements (optional)**

12) **References/Bibliography**

13) **Appendices:**
Learner handouts and worksheets
Presentation slides
Vignettes for discussion
Simulation materials
Additional evaluation tools

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