

# Conducting a Review

Assess the current program to determine areas of strength and areas of weakness. Assess the cohesiveness of the program, the recruitment and retention of students, how teaching and the efficiency of teaching. What is the nature of communication and collaboration among course instructors? Also determine student learning outcomes, the learning environment, and assessment procedures currently being used. Reflect upon how instructors respond to diversity among students or how they utilize resources. Where possible examine available data about the department and reflect on past experiences.

## Looking at Alternatives

Explore new ideas and possibilities for innovation such as: cooperative learning, problem-based learning, inter-disciplinary study, outcomes-based education or experiential learning. Attend workshops, read the academic literature, and discuss teaching and learning strategies with colleagues. Instructors could also facilitate a departmental workshop on a topic that may be of interest to a department.

## A Systematic Approach to Curriculum Development

1. Become familiar with key steps in instructional design/planning.
  - borrow a book, read the academic literature, attend workshop/conference
2. Identify a clear rationale for the change in curriculum. What will the new program look and feel like? Will departmental colleagues support the change?
3. The strategy should be focused and purposeful. Any educational change will automatically affect many other aspects of the educational system. Small changes are the most manageable and are more likely to lead to real, sustained change over a long period of time. Where needed, the process can be repeated.

## Implementing a Curricular Change

Departments wishing to implement curricular changes must through a curriculum development and implementation process. This process is designed to be:

- Systematic – relating to instructional design.

- Specific – relating to teaching methods, teaching materials, and assessment procedures.
- Collective – relating to communication among all stakeholders.

The CTL can help by facilitating this process. Specifically, our office will assist with:

- Devising simple and straightforward exercises that ensure that the department addresses key components of the process from an objective perspective.
- Provide guidance on specific teaching approaches and strategies.
- Act as a liaison between other departments and units (where permission is granted) who have undergone a similar process. This communication sometimes helps to avoid pitfalls.

The CTL's role is to lead the department/unit through the outlined procedures and to assist in efficient and effective ways.

Monitoring the change/assessing the impact

During this phase, it is important to reflect upon the impact that a change(s) has made and to assess next steps in the process. Is retraining of instructors or T.A.s necessary? Should other parts of the curriculum be changed?

The CTL can devise assessment procedures for evaluating the impact of the change. Specifically, the CTL can speak to students and instructors, attend departmental T.A. orientations, or can assist with the training of instructors on a particular topic or skill. We can also keep records of each phase of the development process providing that this is identified as a need ahead of time.