Chapter 8

Curriculum and Instructional Applications

Katharine A. Munning

Introduction

As a teacher of family medicine, each faculty member has some responsibility for curriculum development and the instructional process. Components of this responsibility are overall design of the instructional system, development of integrated curriculum units (e.g., rotations, conference series, clinical continuity experience), preparation of educational objectives, participation in the instructional process, plus preparation of evaluation instruments and participation in the feedback process. Many books and articles describe the theory, importance, and processes of instructional design and curriculum development. This chapter will focus on the predominant writing skills required of faculty members to fulfill their educational responsibilities: writing educational objectives, instructional materials, and educational feedback/evaluation reports.

Instructional Objectives

Written instructional objectives contribute to the educational process in several ways. First, they provide direction for the teacher(s) and clearly communicate the educational intent to other instructors, or learners (residents, medical students, or others). Second, they provide guides for selecting content (e.g., type of patient population, conference topics),
teaching strategies, and instructional materials. Third, they provide a guide for constructing evaluation instruments and the feedback process.

Therefore instructional objectives written as statements of learning outcomes are the cornerstone of the teaching/learning process. Figure 8-1 depicts this relationship. It is clear that learning experiences such as rotations, continuity experience, conference series, etc. are not ends in themselves but are tools to bring about desired learning outcomes. Also evaluation and feedback mechanisms are dependent upon clearly stated outcomes for their content and relevance to the final product.

**Figure 8-1.** Relationships of objectives to instructional system.

*Learner(s)*

Resident  
Medical student  
Other health professionals

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*Teaching/Learning Process*

Teaching strategies (examples):  
- Rotations  
- Conferences  
- Patient care—episodic & continuous  
- Journal club

Interaction of learner, content, teaching strategies, & instructional materials

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*General Learning Outcomes (End Products)*

Knowledge/information  
Problem solving skills  
Communication skills  
Technical/procedural skills  
Professional attitudes and interests  
Continuing education skills  
Interpersonal/social skills

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*Evaluation System*

Feedback in:

- Achievement of learning outcomes  
- Effectiveness of teaching/learning process