

Curriculum Implementation, Instruction, and Technology

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focus questions

1. What are the interrelationships between curriculum implementation and instruction?
2. What role can technology play in curriculum implementation?
3. What are the characteristics of learning tasks that students find meaningful and authentic?
4. What are some models of teaching that are based on behavioral psychology, human development, cognitive processes, and social interactions?
5. What can school leaders do to integrate technology into the curriculum?
6. What expectations does today's tech-savvy student bring to school? How might the curriculum be adapted to address the changing needs and demands of a new generation of tech-savvy learners?

This chapter focuses on the interrelationships between curriculum implementation and instruction and the mediating role and function of technology in today's classroom. The articles in this chapter illustrate, in varying ways, that *what* teachers teach (the content of the curriculum) is as important as *how* they teach (the instructional methods used). The role of technology in changing teaching and learning is also discussed in the chapter and in the articles. As technology changes the world we live in, so, too, does it change education. Curriculum decisions are now influenced by technology in ways unimaginable 50 years ago, and the next 50 years promise changes equally dramatic.

Within the curriculum field, some theorists consider curriculum and instruction as separate, yet related, dimensions of education (see Beauchamp's *Curriculum Theory* [1981], for example). Others see the distinction between the two as an artificial construct (see Dewey's *Democracy and Education* [1916], for example). Regardless of how one views the relationship between curriculum and instruction, both are vital elements of the educative process. As the following comments by a teacher suggest, teaching requires expertise at developing the curriculum—and expertise at using instructional methods to reach curriculum goals:

Before becoming a teacher, I imagined that I would teach my students, they would take a test, and I would evaluate my teaching based on their test scores. Actually, that cycle happens very little. It is a part of teaching, but relating to kids, being able to encourage them, being able to laugh with them matters more and more as I develop my teaching style. Encouragement, respect, and trust—those things really make a difference. I am really interested in my subject, mathematics, but I am learning that what matters most to students and to me is becoming excited about learning. When I feel that excitement from the kids . . . that's what makes teaching great.

Curriculum and instruction are not separate, mutually exclusive elements of teaching; they are connected, as the figure below suggests. They are both part of teaching; each influences the other. When a teacher decides to include certain content in the curriculum, that decision means