

Curriculum and Instructional Design: Planning for Institutions and Educational Systems

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Introduction

The vision and mission statement encapsulate the aspirations and intended operations of an organization or program within a larger system. It sets the working space and changes for the people and operations within the system. In education, these plans and organizing principles should be reflected throughout the organization.

Vision

The vision outlines the ideal view of the future of an organization. It describes the role and actions to be taken over a given period of time.

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This can be the near-term view or the hopes for what will be its end state at the completion of the implementation of the plan. The vision is a view of the future state as seen by the leadership. Often it presents a description of the core principles. The vision can also reveal the core philosophical stance of the organizations. This leads to a picture of its acting members in order to serve its clients and stakeholders. Educational systems comprised of a wide range of stakeholders making this very applicable.

Mission

The Mission statement describes a detailed picture of how the vision will be enacted.

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It outlines the roles within the organization and defines its purpose. Thus, the mission presents the high-level steps needed to accomplish the mission. Often the mission will include a discussion of the values and methods to move the agenda forward. In educational contexts, the mission includes a description of needed actions to enact change and serve its population. It will also include a charge for those who will implement the instructional processes and a statement of the stakeholders and their roles.

Goals and Objectives

The vision and mission statements lead to goals and objectives. The goal is the statement of a larger aim. Objectives are milestones to accomplish along the way to that goal. Both goals and objectives are statements of position. They describe a state to attain along a path or level of accomplishment. Then, clearly defined goals and objectives lead to metrics for evaluation. These metrics measure the progress and attainment of goals connected to the vision and mission.

Strategies and Tactics

Strategies and tactics underlie the vision and mission statements. These are defined to outline how goals and objectives will be acted upon over time. The strategies are the larger longer-term actions intended to accomplish a series of goals or attain milestones. Then, Tactics are actions taken to move the plan forward usually in shorter time frames. Both strategies and tactics change over time. Neither works for all people in all situations.

The strategies and tactics; are interconnected. They described related actions at different time scales and levels of detail in the same way that goals build upon objectives. Clear strategies with associated tactics facilitate goal attainment within the given limits. Organizations may develop goals and objectives to build larger level plans. Others create a vision and mission before working down to formulate strategies and tactics. This top-down approach is how many educational systems implement reform. Unfortunately, change in this way is difficult and time-consuming.

Layering of plans

In education, institutions operate at large scales. The work being described is both vast and conducted over a long time. Nonetheless, goals and objectives set the plan to be followed. Layers are built upon one another. This creates more detailed sets of materials describing what should occur. This leads down towards the lowest levels of curriculum and instructional design. Teachers must have explicit goals and objectives as they plan for the interaction with students. Then teachers choose particular instructional strategies and specific teaching tactics within the defined scope of the instructional design. This is the only way it can be effectively evaluated and thus improved over time.

The scope of each more specific level is smaller but must be tied to the larger overarching plans for consistency. In the end, it does not matter if you work top-down or bottom-up. The repeated interconnected sets of goals and objectives are at the heart of curriculum making.

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