



## MODELS OF COURSE DESIGN AND STEPS FOR COURSE DEVELOPMENT

An idea or a perception that there is a need for a CPD program often comes from personal observation, patterns seen in referrals to specialists, QI data, or conversations with colleagues. Once the idea is formed a series of steps are needed to make the program a reality.

At this stage it is recommended that course directors and organizers use a model to help plan the broad strokes of a program.

A very simple model asks 3 questions. If you itemize answers to all three of these questions in relation to your program, you can be guaranteed all important aspects of course design is “covered”

### The Three Questions:

#### ***Where am I going? (needs assessment, goals and objectives)***

- What is the idea itself?
- How do I know there is a need?
- Who are the target audiences?
- What do they think they need (perceived need)?
- What are we hoping to accomplish (broad sense or goals)?
- What specific things will participants be able to do as a result if attending (learning objectives)

#### ***How will I get there? (methods, logistics and implementation plans)***

- Which teaching/learning methods are in alignment with the goals and objectives that we have set?
- Who are the best people to conduct the program?
- What kinds of logistical arrangements are needed?
- What kind of budget/funds do we need?
- What other aspects are required? (venue, refreshments, equipment)

#### ***How will I know that I'm there? (evaluation)***

- What evidence is needed to demonstrate the program accomplished its goals and objectives?
- Do we want to measure satisfaction, competence, performance?

**Questions? Comments? Suggestions?** Contact one of our Educational Consultants at [quicktips@utoronto.ca](mailto:quicktips@utoronto.ca)

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Course development is a cyclical and iterative process. After the first rendition of a program, the evaluation can then provide more information on learning needs and methods for the next time.



- Learning needs determine goals and objectives
- Objectives guide evaluation
- Evaluation guides revision of objectives
- Objectives guide choice of educational strategies

### Kern's 6 Step Model for Curriculum Development

Another model to consider in designing a course is a model that has been well researched in the educational literature.

**Step 1:** This model starts with identifying and clarifying the “problem” For example:

- Who does the problem effect?
  - Patient, learners, medical educators
- What does it affect?
  - Clinical outcomes, educational outcomes, quality of life, other health care resources
- How big is the problem?
  - High, medium, low

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**Step 2:** Once the problem is identified the model then asks:

- How is it currently being addressed?
- How it should be addressed – What is the ideal approach?
- Difference between current and ideal = general needs assessment

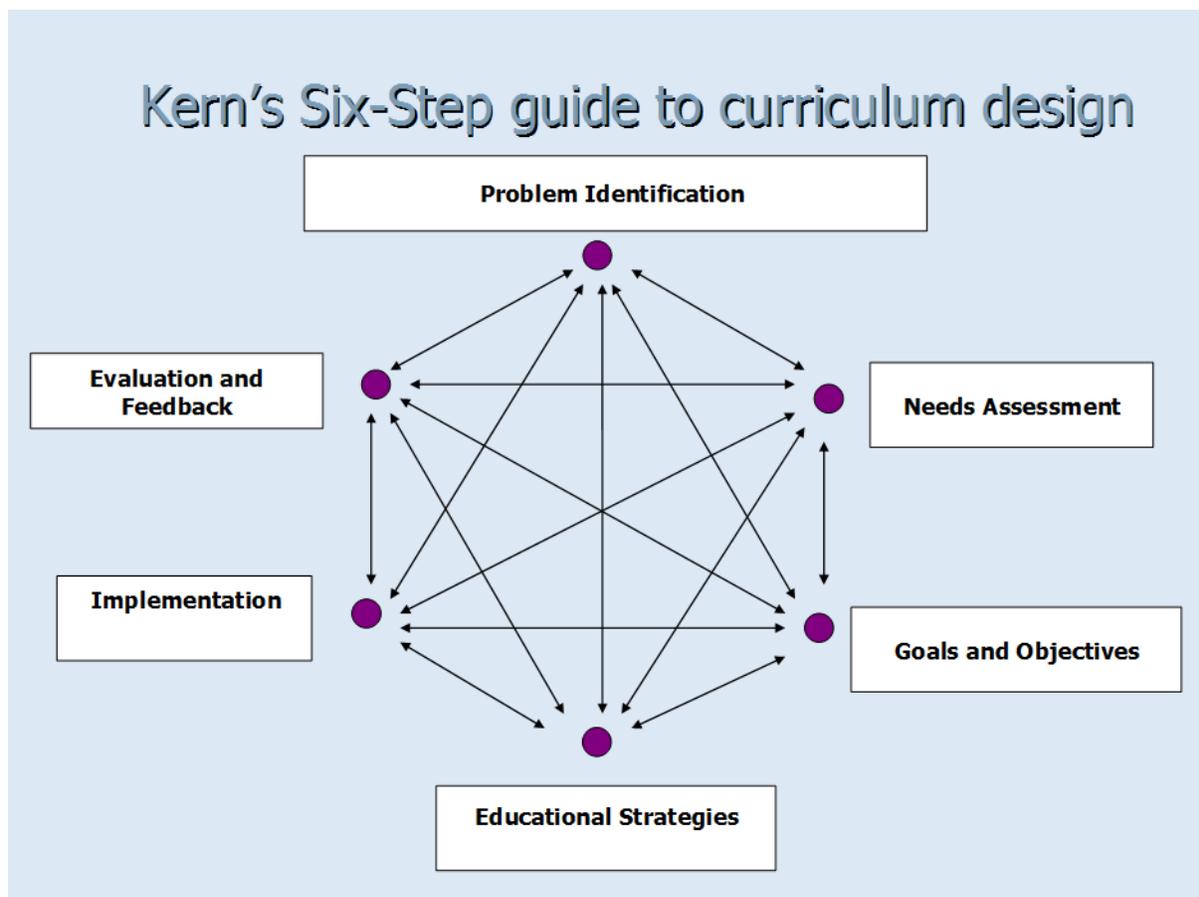
**Step 3:** And then moves on to ask questions similar to those above such as:

- What are the general goals?
- What are the specific outcomes we want to achieve (learning objectives)?

**Step 4:** What methods or strategies should we use to accomplish goals and objectives?

**Step 5:** Implementing the program

**Step 6:** Evaluating the outcomes and collecting feedback



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### References

- Caffarella, R. S. (2001). Planning programs for adult learners: A practical guide for educators, trainers, and staff developers (2 ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.
- Kern, D., Thomas, P., Howard, D., & Bass, E. (1998). Curriculum development for medical education: a six-step approach. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. PDF available through [www.medicine.osu.edu/education/document/curriculum\\_design](http://www.medicine.osu.edu/education/document/curriculum_design)
- Moore DE, Green J and Gallis A (2009). Achieving Desired Results and Improved Outcomes: Integrating Planning and Assessment Throughout Learning Activates. JCHEP 29(1). For a more in depth discussion of program planning we highly recommend reading this article. Moore et al argue for an approach that addresses process as well as content and some of the more complex issues related to learning.

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