



[About the
Modules](#)

[Preface](#)

[General
Introduction](#)

[Contents](#)

[Introductory
Module](#)

[Module One](#)

[Module Two](#)

[Module Three](#)

[Module Four](#)

[Module Five](#)

[Module Six](#)

[Module Seven](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Home](#)

[Visit our
website](#)

MODULE FOUR

UNIT ONE

Establishing the Curriculum

Introduction

In this unit we consider the meaning of the term curriculum and some of the basic things we need to know about it, including the importance of adapting it to your local contexts and to the needs and abilities of your pupils. Each school head must know how to manage the curriculum: to follow national guidelines, to develop a school curriculum and to organise school life in a way which will enhance the hidden curriculum.

Individual study time : 2 hours

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit you should be able to :

- explain the need for you to manage the establishment, adaptation and development of the school curriculum
- identify key factors which need to be taken into account in curriculum design
- produce a school curriculum which is compatible with the dictates and guidelines laid down by the government.

Principles and constraints of curriculum design

Activity 1.1

- (1) Explain in your own words the meaning of the term curriculum.
- (2) Identify six reasons why it is quite difficult to design a good curriculum.

15 minutes

Comments

The curriculum has been defined as all the experiences provided by a school to educate the pupils. It also involves helping teachers provide the best information on subject matter, taking into account the interests of pupils and contemporary social needs. A curriculum is a course of subjects and co-curricular activities that must be covered by the pupils, but it should also aim at developing them mentally, physically and morally, and at embracing the hidden curriculum which includes behaviour patterns and attitudes of the pupils and staff and the general tone and ethos of the school.

The curriculum should be dynamic and be evolving all the time. It is the job of the head to manage this process in the school.

Some of the basic principles which should be taken into account in designing your school curriculum include :

- 1 It should satisfy the philosophy and educational purposes of the school and the nation.
- 2 It should be developed from 'grassroots' level and include parent and community contributions.
- 3 It should make allowance for the special education needs of pupils.
- 4 It should take into consideration the culture, customs and traditions, both of the country and the region.
- 5 It should provide practical educational experiences.

Constraints

Did your list of the constraints in developing your curriculum include the following?

- 1 It is not a task with which everyone in schools is familiar.
- 2 It is unlikely that the curriculum can take into account every local tradition.
- 3 The curriculum you would like to offer may well be constrained by a lack of physical resources.
- 4 There may be problems in selecting a language of instruction which suits the needs of every pupil.
- 5 Some teachers believe that they have to follow the official curriculum exactly.
- 6 No procedures have been developed in our school or time allowed for curriculum development work.

Using local resources

Activity 1.2

Subjects where local studies and interpretation should be encouraged include Art and Craft, Geography, History, Practical Agriculture, Science. For each of these subjects indicate ways in which the local environment can be used to enrich the curriculum:

- Art and Craft;
- Geography;
- History;
- Practical Agriculture;
- Science.

15 minutes

Comments

In many countries where the curriculum is designed and decided centrally, it may appear as though teachers have little or no input. But by indirectly interpreting and implementing the curriculum, successful innovative ideas can ultimately lead to curriculum modification at the national level.

You probably thought of many ways in which you already use local resources, for example:

- Art and Craft: local designs in cloth, pottery and architecture
- Geography: the relationships between the way people live and their environment
- History: learning from oral traditions of the people
- Practical Agriculture : applying the lessons from local progressive farmers to the school farm
- Science : aspects of the natural and human environments.

Factors governing the curriculum

Activity 1.3

Basic factors which need to be considered in curriculum development include:

- the age of the pupils;
- the range of ability levels of the pupils;
- inter-relationships between subjects;
- degree specialisation in subject areas.

Identify four other factors which need to be taken into consideration.

15 minutes.

Comments

You could also have considered :

- the time available for teaching and learning
- the availability of funds to provide both specialist facilities, such as laboratories, and simple resources, such as chalk and books
- the level of training and experience of the average teacher
- the type of work and its availability open to those pupils completing school.

The hidden curriculum

A school curriculum consists of a number of subjects which give pupils a body of knowledge and skills, co-curricular activities which create and develop their interests, and the 'hidden curriculum' which mainly affects pupil attitudes, maturity, growth and behaviour.

Activity 1.4

Suggest why the following might be regarded as part of the hidden curriculum:

- the punctuality of teachers;
- the way teachers interact with each other;
- the cleanliness of the school compound;
- the personality of the school head;
- the choice of subjects by pupils.

10 minutes

Comments

Although we may reveal some aspects of the hidden curriculum, in fact there will always be many influences on the way pupils behave, on what they learn and on the interests they develop, which we can never plan for in the curriculum or the co-curricular programme, or, indeed, ever find out about. But there is a lot we can do to try to influence what happens and your answers to the items above should have illustrated this.

Creating a total curriculum

In many countries around the world the concepts of democracy, self-reliance and national identity are deliberately included in the daily instructional activities and general running of each school.

Activity 1.5

Which of the statements in Fig 1 is describing something which supports either the Core Curriculum (Column A), the Hidden Curriculum (Column B), or the Co-Curriculum (Column C)?

10 minutes

Fig 1 The total curriculum

Fig 1 The total curriculum

STATEMENTS	A CORE CURRICULUM	B HIDDEN CURRICULUM	C CO-CURRICULUM
1 Discuss moral issues at the school assembly.			
2 Ensure that the school library is stocked with relevant, up-to-date texts.			
3 Organise internal school and staff development workshops for teachers.			
4 Encourage pupil participation in running the school through a prefect system.			
5 Request and ensure adequate and appropriate facilities and supplies.			
6 Allow teachers to participate in curriculum panels.			
7 Check the effect of curriculum on the attitudes and behaviour of pupils.			
8 Encourage the formation of clubs and societies and participation of pupils.			
9 Expect good work ethics amongst teachers.			
10 Ensure that supplementary books and support materials are available.			

Comments

You may find that your answers differ from someone else who has done this exercise. These are the answers given by Mrs A and Mr B:

	Mrs A	Mr B
Core Curriculum	1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10	2,3,5,10
Hidden Curriculum	1,3,6,7,8,9	1,4,6,7,8,9
Co-Curriculum	3,6,8	4,8

Note that some items have been placed in more than one type of curriculum. Which of these sets of answers is closest to your own? You might like to reflect on why such different answers arise.

Learning about the curriculum

Activity 1.6

A man was appointed head in a new secondary school, 500 kilometres from his home in an area unknown to him. Before arriving at his new school he did some advance work on curriculum planning. In order to do this he collected data and advice from a number of sources.

(1) Complete Fig 2.

(2) Identify other people or data sources that he should have consulted, whether available in his home location, at his new school or elsewhere.

15 minutes

Fig 2 Sources of data

In the square opposite each source: put G = of great value; S = of some value; or L = of little value:

His father, a subsistence farmer

His local chief, one of the most respected of traditional leaders in the country

Published educational legislation

His former primary school head

A visiting teacher on holiday from the region to which the man has been appointed

Comments

A new school head will have a lot to learn about the curriculum existing in his school and about the development work which will be needed. He will need to learn about the 'official' curriculum, but also about the nature and quality of the work presently done in his new school, about the pupils, the teachers and the community, as well as about the whole environment in which the school is located. Thus he should consult with a wide variety of people in order to inform himself about every aspect of school life.

Summary

In this unit we have demonstrated that there are various forms of curriculum, all of which need to be recognised and planned for. A school curriculum is not the same as the curriculum prepared by the government, and it is not something which just happens, it has to be managed and planned. Every head has a considerable task in ensuring a full and balanced curriculum in their school.

[Next](#)

