

Unit 5: Curriculum

AIM

The aim of this unit is to enable the inspector to describe and explain the principles of curriculum development, management and evaluation in order to assist schools to raise pupils' standards of achievement.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, the inspector will be able to:

- define the term 'curriculum'
- explain the curriculum development process
- identify problems and solutions of curriculum development and the implementation process
- explain the management of curriculum
- explain the concept 'hidden curriculum'
- describe curriculum change and innovation
- list ways of evaluating curriculum.

CONTENT SUMMARY

- 5.1 Curriculum Development Process
- 5.2 Problems and Solutions of Curriculum Development and Implementation
- 5.3 The Hidden Curriculum
- 5.4 Management of the Curriculum
- 5.5 Curriculum Change and Innovation
- 5.6 Curriculum Evaluation

5.1 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Activity 5a

In groups, discuss the definition of the term 'curriculum'. Consensus should be reached in the group on the most acceptable definition of the term 'curriculum'.

Key Information

The definition of the term 'curriculum development' should include:

- a structured set of learning experiences
- studies organised for a particular group
- action designed to produce a structured set of learning experiences
- intended learning outcomes
- content that people are expected to learn
- content organised according to grades, levels and age
- learning experiences putting more emphasis on what should be learnt.

5.2 STAGES, PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

5.2.1 Stages of Curriculum Development

Activity 5b

In small groups, discuss the stages of curriculum development.

Key Information

The curriculum development process should include:

(a) Curriculum Planning

- conducting needs analysis
- determining target groups
- determining curriculum design
- determining curriculum format
- writing an action plan
- determining who to involve

(b) Curriculum Diagnosis (examination) of the design

- relating needs to subject areas
- generating goals and objectives

(c) Curriculum Development (content and topic selection)

- determining criteria for selection of subject content and learning experiences (topics)
- selection of content
- organization of content
- relating topics to the educational environment
 - e.g. - selecting learning experiences (topics)
 - organizing learning experiences (topics)
 - selecting instructional strategies (methods)
 - selecting assessment methods

(d) Curriculum Implementation

- pilot testing
- planning evaluation and selection of data
- analysis of data
- final implementation

(e) Curriculum Evaluation

- formative evaluation
- summative evaluation

(f) Curriculum Maintenance

- managing the curriculum system (monitoring)
- examining curriculum support structures (e.g. provision of resources)

5.2.2 Problems and Solutions of Curriculum Development and Implement

Activity 5c

Identify problem areas you are likely to encounter at each of the stages in the curriculum development process and suggest solutions.

Key Information

Problem areas that may be encountered are:

- difficulty in finding appropriate personnel (stage a)
- some topics may overlap (stage b)
- lack of financial resources for developing the curriculum (stage c)
- untrained teachers may have a problem in implementing the curriculum (stage d)
- lack of assessment and evaluation skills by inspectors and teachers (stage b)
- inadequate manpower to facilitate the monitoring process (stage f).

Suggested solutions may include:

- use of consultants (stage a)
- curriculum mapping to reduce overlaps (stage b)
- soliciting funds from donor agencies (stage c)
- use of qualified teachers and in-service teachers (stage d)
- provision of training in assessment and evaluation to teachers and inspectors (stage e)
- deployment of manpower to assist in monitoring the implementation of the curriculum (stage f).

5.3 THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

Activity 5d

Suggest why the following may be regarded as part of the hidden curriculum

- the punctuality of teachers
- the way teachers dress
- cleanliness of the school compound
- personality of the school head
- the choice of subjects by pupils
- the school climate
- the school mission statements

Key Information

The term 'hidden curriculum' may include:

- interest of pupils
- ambitions
- gender balance
- gender bias
- gender sensitivity

- environmental influence
- cultural norms and biases
- attitudes
- behaviours
- growth
- socio-economic background
- informal learning experiences
- religious influences

5.4 MANAGEMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

Activity 5e

In groups, discuss ways by which you can assist the teacher in curriculum management.

Key Information

Management of the curriculum should include:

- provision and delivery of appropriate curriculum activities
- improvement of skills in different aspects of curriculum management e.g. operation timetabling and curriculum development and change
- provision of textbooks, library, media resources and their control
- demonstration of improved stock keeping
- ensuring a well designed and operational time table
- coverage of subject content.

5.5 CURRICULUM CHANGE AND INNOVATION

Activity 5f

In groups discuss:

- (a) The meaning of the term curriculum change and innovation.
- (b) Give reasons which influence curriculum change and innovation.
- (c) What problems are encountered in curriculum change and innovation?

Note: Groups should come together and give feedback on (a), (b) and (c).

Key Information

Curriculum change and innovation refers to efforts made by education authorities to change and adapt their aims and objectives of teaching and learning according to the values, cultures, philosophies as well as the resources at their disposal. This is one way to make education more responsive and relevant to the needs of the community.

Reasons for Curriculum Change and Innovation

(a) More relevant education

- Alternative schools
 - private schools
 - special schools
- Integrated learning
- Life-long education
- Resource based learning
- Differentiated education

(b) Improvement of teaching and learning

- Competence based education
- Continuous assessment
- Learner centred education
- Remedial teaching
- Peer teaching
- Programmed learning
- Resource centres
- Study centres
- Teacher centres
- Team teaching
- Project approach
- Language experience approach

(c) Community demands for value for money in education

- Accountability/responsibility
- Competency
- Correspondence education
- Educational broadcasting
- Extended school day and year
- Shift system

(d) Problems of Curriculum Change and Innovation

- Participation by all involved
- Official support
- Adequate preparation
- Realistic objectives
- Obstacles to innovation
 - e.g. - negative attitudes towards change
 - lack of resources i.e. human, material, financial
 - fear of the unknown

5.6 CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Activity 5g

- (a) In groups, define the concept 'curriculum evaluation' and discuss how it influences change.
- (b) Discuss the role of formative and summative evaluation in curriculum change.

Key Information

Curriculum evaluation should include:

- instruments by which the effects of the curriculum can be tested
- the degree to which its objectives can be achieved
- testing and assessment
- formative evaluation which is done as you go along and assists the pupils in knowing what they have achieved
- summative evaluation which is made at a certain point - usually the end of a course, or a unit, or a module and is often used for the purpose of reporting
- diagnostic evaluation which is made primarily in order to inform the teachers planning for the next stage of learning. It is usually done at the start of a new course, unit or module but can be beneficial to individual pupils during a course of study.

REFLECTION

Having covered this unit, would you be able to describe and explain the principles of curriculum development, management and evaluation?

REFERENCES

- Commonwealth Secretariat (1993). *Better Schools Resources Materials for School Heads, Module Four: Managing the Curriculum and Resources*
- Farrant J.S. (1991) *Principles and Practice of Education*, Longman
- Kachama B.N.C. (1982) *Handbook for Inspectors*, Ministry of Education and Culture
- Ministry of Education and Culture (1993) *An Essential Handbook For Inspectors of Primary Education*