EDUCATION
MICROPLANNING
TOOLKIT

ENHANCING CURRICULUM AND TEACHING PROCESSES TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING
## MODULE 4

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LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS MODULE

1.1 Become familiar with the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes contributing to enhancing curricula.

1.2 Be able to plan strategies for curriculum planning and assessing teachers, classroom practices and learning outcomes with a view to enhancing student learning.

1.3 Understand the process of assessing teaching and learning.

1.4 Learn from experiences in other countries and be able to select and adapt relevant practices to suit local needs.
STRUCTURE OF THE TOOLKIT

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In the earlier modules of this toolkit (Module 1 to 3), you gained the basic knowledge, techniques, processes, skills and tools for conducting education planning at the local level. The focus of this module is to help you become familiar with the planning, implementation and evaluation processes relating to curricula and teaching and learning.

The key elements and issues to be considered in this module can be categorized into two areas:

- Curriculum development and evaluation
- Assessment of teaching and learning

In each area, there are specific focus questions or factors that the microplanner should consider. The module does not offer standard responses to these questions and factors, but the skills and methods presented in the earlier modules can be applied to identify needs and will inform the formulation of strategies that best suit your own situation.

This module acknowledges the importance of issues related to teacher quality, but it does not address these issues in detail. It is planned that a new module will be developed to focus particularly on these issues. The planned module will be included in the next edition of the toolkit, together with any comments and feedback received on the toolkit’s usefulness and practicality.
Given that teaching and learning processes mainly happen in schools, decision-making about teaching and learning should be geared to the needs of students and teachers. In this respect, it is important that teachers, school principals and education officers actively participate in decision-making. In the following sections, we will look into different aspects of microplanning for curriculum and teaching and learning – the mechanisms, policies, processes and people.

4.1 Curriculum development and evaluation

It is generally agreed that the curriculum is a key component of the teaching and learning process. In the past, education planners and administrators at the provincial and local level confined themselves to the existing structure of education, not questioning the curriculum or the teaching and learning process (UNESCO, 1991). They therefore implemented the national curriculum without any adjustments for the local context, despite the fact that the curricula devised by central governments are often not applicable to the specific needs of individual local communities. In the context of globalization and the increasingly decentralized environment in education, modern education planning is putting more emphasis on formulating curricula that address needs of local communities. In this respect, local communities are increasingly being given support in adapting the national curriculum to cater for their specific needs. By the same token, it is possible for planning to go further down to the school and classroom levels through to school-based curriculum development processes. This ensures that the curriculum is appropriate to the local context and is also properly planned, implemented and evaluated at the local level, while being, at the same time, aligned with the national curriculum. Although this is a great challenge for most countries, progress is being made in many places.
Inspired by the P-I-E model (Johnson, 1977) the process of curriculum development can be conceptualized as a three-phase model, as illustrated in the figure below.

**Figure 1: Curriculum development model**

Each phase of the curriculum development model has a number of key steps and specific tasks to be completed in a logical sequence. The following elaborations are largely adapted from Glatthorn, et al. (2006), Sawi (1996) and UNESCO-IBE (2009).

### 4.1.1 Phase 1 – Curriculum planning and development

For the purpose of this toolkit, the discussion that follows focuses on two levels of planning:

- Country and provincial level
- District and school level
**Step 1: Set up the organizational structure**

The first step in developing a curriculum is to lay the foundations. This involves setting up the organizational structure to facilitate planning. The organizational structure should be simple, flexible and able to respond quickly to changing needs. Two standing committees for curriculum development could be set up: one at the district level and one at the school level. These committees will serve to provide advice. Members of these committees should be nominated and appointed by the relevant authorities and their memberships could be renewed or replaced after serving for a stated period of time – to ensure continuity and also a dynamic organization with a mechanism to bring in fresh ideas.

The district curriculum advisory council or committee membership could include:

- Superintendent of the school district or assistant superintendent (chairperson)
- District education or curriculum directors or officers
- School principals
- Teachers
- Parents or parent-teacher association (PTA) representatives
- Other community representatives

The school curriculum advisory council or committee membership could include:

- School principal or deputy principal (chairperson)
- Curriculum development leader or coordinator
- Subject department heads or panel heads
- Grade-level heads or coordinators
- Teachers
- Parents or PTA representatives
Step 2: Form a curriculum development team

Once the major curriculum planning decisions have been determined by the committees and translated into an action plan, the next step is to form a curriculum development team (CDT) to develop the new curriculum or make revisions to the existing curriculum at the district or school level.

To ensure the CDT achieves its aims, it is necessary to select the CDT members carefully. Since no single individual has all the required skills, expertise and calibre to design and develop a good quality curriculum on their own, the team leader needs to ensure that the team as a whole has or acquires the required knowledge, competences and experience to fulfil its responsibilities. In general, the team members selected should be creative and have prior experience in teaching and in writing instructional material (Glatthorn et. al., 2006). For the actual selection of the CDT team, leaders may identify and develop specific criteria depending on the scope, complexity and goals of the curriculum development task. A successful CDT usually comprises a combination of specialists and educators as well as representatives from the community.

Team members could include:

- Curriculum planning and design experts
- Subject matter experts
- Exemplary teachers and experts in pedagogy
- Specialists in the production of instructional materials (e.g. editor, graphic designer, technical writers)
- Representatives from the community

The major functions and responsibilities of the CDT include the following:

- To gather and review relevant education and curriculum documents.
- Government education and curriculum documents, including policy papers, consultation reports, curriculum evaluation reports, school subject documents and guidelines.
- Subject area documents, including course content and teaching materials, and course evaluation reports.
Other materials, including research reports and publications published by academic institutions and interested groups in the community.

To seek views and advice from stakeholders and experts for planning the curriculum. The process is presented in Module 3 on conducting a needs assessment. The needs assessment process is also discussed briefly below.

To develop and write the curriculum outline and materials, taking into consideration the results of the needs assessment and the information that has been collected.

To test, modify and finalize the developed curriculum materials taking into consideration feedback collected from consultations and trial teaching.

To provide consultation, user guides, training materials and staff development on implementing the new or revised curriculum materials.

**Step 3: Conduct a needs assessment**

To determine what changes are necessary in the national curriculum so that it will be appropriate for the needs of the local community, it is necessary to conduct a needs assessment. For a detailed description of how to conduct a needs assessment, refer to Module 3 of this toolkit. In simple terms, a needs assessment is a process of identifying the gap between “what is” and “what should be” (Glatthorn, et al., 2006, pp. 142-145).

Sawi (1996) uses a simple mathematical formula to show the linkage between “what should be” and “what is” as shown in the figure below.

**Figure 2:** Assessing needs: Calculating the gap between “what is” and “what should be”

\[ \text{GAP} = \text{WHAT SHOULD BE} - \text{WHAT IS} \]

\[ \text{Need} = \text{Desired performance} - \text{Actual performance} \]
A useful tool for assessing the curriculum and deciding what needs to be changed to meet the needs of the local community is a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This tool can be used for analyzing the overall situation. A matrix can be used to list the strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum, opportunities for change, and threats that might eventuate as a result of that change (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3:** SWOT analysis framework

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Threats</td>
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The following five questions will assist schools in identifying whether the existing curriculum requires improvement (adapted from Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2012):

- What student outcomes is the school trying to achieve through the delivery of the existing school curriculum?
- What student outcomes did the school achieve?
- Why has the school achieved or not achieved good learning outcomes? Were poor outcomes due to the curriculum content and materials, or were they due to existing pedagogical methods, instructional approaches and teaching and learning activities?
- How effectively has the school managed its resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?
- What can the school do to improve the design and delivery of the school curriculum?
Step 4: Secure resources needed for the new or revised curriculum

You may need resources for developing or revising the curriculum. It is important for microplanners to make sure that sufficient resources for adjusting a curriculum are secured in the early stage of curriculum development, and it is necessary to match the expectations with the likelihood of resources. Microplanners should also be aware that it usually requires many more resources, in terms of both financial and human resources, for implementing a curriculum than for developing a new curriculum.

Step 5: Prepare the new or revised curriculum

Before beginning, be fully cognizant of the national curriculum framework. A national curriculum framework “often expresses the state’s aims of education, and can define minimum standards for content and assessment, as well as teacher qualifications, educational resources and learning materials, management, and evaluation” (UNESCO-IBE, 2009). Ensure compliance with these standards when developing a local or school curriculum.

4.1.2 Phase 2 – Curriculum implementation

Curriculum implementation is the process of utilizing the curriculum in schools. At the district level and school level, curriculum implementation refers to the process of teachers putting the planned curriculum into practice with real students in real schools (UNESCO-IBE, 2009).

There are often three major challenges in implementing a new curriculum:

- Lack of local technical expertise to teach the new curriculum.
- Resistance (fear of the unknown) among school managers, teachers and community members.
- Lack of appropriate curriculum materials and resources.

These obstacles can be overcome through:

- Providing training for school managers and teachers.
Ensuring an appropriate level of professional autonomy at the school level accompanied by a good understanding of its strengths and limitations in human and financial resources, so that there is room for teachers and school managers to support and carry out the curriculum strategies and formulated plans.

Ensuring clear and open communication exists between central and local authorities.

To identify the needs that school managers have in terms of capacity building, it is useful to look at the roles of managers and think critically about whether existing staff have the skills required to fulfil their responsibilities in these roles.

**Table 1: Human resources**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Roles of leaders and managers</th>
<th>Selected Key Actions</th>
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| Leading                      | • Create and promote organizational culture dedicated to quality for all children.  
                              | • Create and demand supportive environments for teachers and schools.  
                              | • Establish overall staffing philosophy and hire great managers (central office and principals). |
| Managing                     | • Define and focus on results (success for students).  
                              | • Motivate and develop teaching and other talents.  
                              | • Create working environments that demand and support quality education and curriculum implementation. |
| Planning                     | • Forecast the demand and characteristics of top-quality people  
                              | • Identify sources of the people who have those characteristics. |
| Acquiring                    | • Develop strategies to get those people to fill the vacancies. |
| Maintaining                  | • Provide induction and orientation to new staff.  
                              | • Allocate the right place/job to the right people. |
| Developing                   | • Provide coaching and access to professional development.  
                              | • Create and manage in line with career and performance plans. |
### 4.1.3 Phase 3 – Curriculum evaluation

Curriculum evaluation is done for accountability and quality improvement purposes. Continuous improvement of curricula is necessary to ensure these curricula are relevant for current needs. Curriculum evaluation also provides feedback on any curriculum adjustments that have been made (UNESCO-IBE, 2009).

Evaluation is a decision-making process that involves gathering data that will support decisions about whether or not to change something, whether it is the curriculum as a whole or just a textbook (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998).

The fundamental concerns of curriculum evaluation relate to:

- Effectiveness of the curriculum in translating government education policy and local needs into educational practice.
- Status of curriculum content and practices.
- The achievement of the goals of local education programmes.

The process of evaluating a curriculum involves four phases:

- Setting the focus and objectives
- Data collection
Analysis

Reporting

This process is illustrated graphically below.

**Figure 4:** Curriculum evaluation process

**PHASE 1: SETTING THE FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES**
- The evaluator determines what is to be evaluated, which may be the total school curriculum, a particular grade level or a particular subject.
- Set out the objectives clearly.

**PHASE 2: DATA COLLECTION**
- Identify the information to be collected and the tools for collecting the data.
- Identify the people from whom data is to be collected.
- Conduct the data collection.

**PHASE 3: ANALYSIS**
- Analyse the data.
- Use statistical tools, where necessary, to compare significant differences and to establish correlation or relationship between variables.

**PHASE 4: REPORTING**
- Prepare a report describing the findings and the conclusions from the interpretation of the data.
- Present the findings in the form of tables and graphs.
- Make recommendations based on the conclusions.

*Source: Adapted from: People Learn, Chapter 8.*

Evaluation specialists have developed an array of curriculum evaluation models. Each of these models has its strengths and limitations. One example is the Context-Input-Process-Product model (Glatthorn, et al., 2006).

When evaluating a curriculum at the district or school level, microplanners should focus on two aspects. Firstly, how successfully the teachers as a whole carried out the curriculum strategies and plans. This evaluates the effectiveness of curriculum implementation – whether the planned curriculum and activities produce desired results (McNeil, 1977). Secondly, how the school can improve teaching strategies based on evidence collected from review of curriculum activities and students’ performance. This is about how to improve curriculum offerings (McNeil, 1977) thereby enhancing the overall quality of learning and teaching.
Good quality data is a key component in any successful curriculum evaluation process. The following diagram shows an approach to gathering relevant evidence about the effectiveness of a curriculum in bringing about education goals (EDB, 2008).

**Figure 5:** Evidence gathering process

At the heart of an effective evaluation process is reliable and appropriate information. Useful information is:

- **Timely** – data (evidence) is gathered regularly in the course of curriculum implementation, at appropriate points of time.

- **Valid** – evidence is collected through multiple channels (teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders) and in different formats (lesson observations, interviews, stakeholder questionnaires, curriculum documents, samples of student work, and students’ performance in internal and public examinations and tests), which can demonstrate the effectiveness of the implemented curriculum.

- **Reliable** – sound and well designed methods are used to collect and triangulate the evidence.

Microplanners should highlight the quality improvement functions of curriculum evaluation.
In other words, the success of curriculum evaluation depends on what decisions are made in the evaluation process and how the decisions are translated into actions for improvement in the curriculum.

The curriculum evaluation process at the school site should be coordinated and conducted by a task group or the curriculum development team, led by an experienced curriculum leader or school leader who has good understanding of the process of evaluation and how it relates to the development of an effective curriculum. He or she should have the expertise to analyse and interpret the data, evaluate the effectiveness of various aspects of the curriculum and its implementation, and translate the evaluation results into concrete plans for curriculum development - showing how teaching and learning can be enhanced via the curriculum.

4.2 Assessing teaching and learning processes

Education reform aims to increase efficiency (i.e. make the best use of resources) in education, quality (i.e. enhance student learning) and equity (i.e. ensure that all students have access to and benefit from the education processes). The three broad aims are all equally essential and education planners should constantly strive to achieve greater levels of efficiency, quality, and equity in the provision of education services.

4.2.1 Assessment of the teaching process

It is generally agreed that teachers are essential to student learning. Although the role of teachers has changed in the 21st century, with learning going from being teacher-centred to student-centred, teachers are still at the heart of education.

Teachers are key players that have direct and significant impact on the quality of education and student learning. “The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers” (Barber and Mourshed, 2007). Thus, education cannot be implemented successfully without good quality teachers.

The following elements are essential for developing good quality teachers:
Teacher supervision and monitoring.

Teacher performance management and professional development.

Teacher professional autonomy.

Today, teaching and learning no longer just focuses on students’ academic performance, but also considers wider development of abilities and skills. As such, teachers need to employ effective strategies to engage their students in active learning in and out of school, taking into consideration students’ diverse needs. It is necessary to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teachers in achieving high quality teaching and learning, so that microplanners can formulate relevant capacity building strategies and programmes to enhance teacher effectiveness.

The following focus questions are useful for microplanners (EDB, 2008):

- How do teachers design their teaching content and adapt teaching strategies in accordance with their teaching objectives?
- How flexible are teachers in adjusting their teaching pace and strategies to cater for the different learning needs of students?
- Are teachers able to create a good classroom learning environment for students? Is the classroom managed effectively?
- Are teachers able to provide opportunities for students to participate in and share their experiences and to promote class interaction so as to enhance learning effectiveness?
- Are teachers equipped with subject knowledge? Do they pace expectations of students at an appropriate level?

4.2.2 Student assessment, feedback and follow-up

Traditionally, student assessment and testing are mainly used for summative purposes such as selection and certification. They are designed for checking the outcome of learning and are separate from the teaching or learning processes. This evaluation approach is known as “Assessment of Learning”. In pursuing high quality education, school systems around the
world are moving towards a new assessment approach: “Assessment for Learning”, which is “a process in which teachers seek to identify and diagnose student learning problems, and provide feedback for students on how to improve their work. Different modes of assessment should be used whenever appropriate for a more comprehensive understanding of student learning” (CDC, 2002). Studies show that when schools adopt “Assessment for Learning” successfully, students can improve their learning based on feedback from teachers and other assessors. At the same time, teachers can improve their curriculum design and content, teaching strategies and classroom organization so that the lessons are better suited to the needs and abilities of their students. On the other hand, the value of assessment for summative purposes or “Assessment of Learning” should also be acknowledged. Therefore, microplanners should help schools develop a clear school assessment policy and a staff development programme to maintain and support the balanced use of the two forms of assessment.

The content of a staff development programme should include the following:

- The different types of assessments and their purposes.
- Assessment strategies – traditional assessment vs. performance assessment (based on performance, requiring students to utilize their knowledge in a meaningful context).
- Reporting and using assessment results for enhancing teaching and learning.
- Equity and fairness in implementing an assessment policy.

4.2.3 Assessment of the learning process

To align with the changing role of teachers, students are today encouraged to take a more active role and responsibility for their learning under the guidance of their teachers. Students are provided with various planned activities to actively engage in exploration, sharing and group work, designed to acquire and foster the aptitude to become lifelong learners.

The following focus questions can be asked when developing strategies to enhance the student learning process (EDB, 2008):

- Do students possess good attitudes, motivation and interest in learning?
ení Are students able to effectively apply learning strategies and resources in their learning, thus attaining their learning goals?

كني Are students able to utilize feedback to improve their learning?

KENI Do students successfully acquire and apply knowledge and skills?

KENI How well do students perform in their learning activities and assignments?

The following are some useful strategies and learning activities for fostering students’ motivation and learning ability:

كني Project work

KENI Collaborative learning

KENI Problem-based learning
This module helps readers to understand the process of curriculum development, which is a three-phase cyclic process including planning, implementation and evaluation. Building a school curriculum team and conducting needs analysis are the two important tasks in the planning phase. At the school level, planners may use a SWOT analysis to understand strengths and limitations of the existing curriculum, while at the same time paying attention to striking a balance between national interests and local needs. A clear curriculum framework, including a set of curriculum standards, is a key component for successful curriculum development.

This module also examines processes for assessing the effectiveness and quality of teaching and learning in schools. It provides focus questions and key points to consider when assessing teachers, student learning, and the learning process itself.
Case 1: **ICT Professional Development of Teachers in Thailand: The Lead-Teacher Model**

*Source: UNESCO, 2009*

The Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology, an autonomous body within the Ministry of Education of Thailand, has developed a Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programme in support of educational reform. The ultimate goal of this in-service teacher training programme is to improve students’ learning outcomes, particularly in science and mathematics, to reach international standards.

One component of the TPD programme aims to improve the skills of teachers in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and enable teachers to utilize forms of ICT (e.g. videos, radio programmes and computers) effectively as tools for teaching.

The primary objectives of the ICT component of the programme were to:

- Develop, support and empower lead trainers for in-service teacher training in the uses of ICT tools, particularly in mathematics and science subjects.
- Design and disseminate ICT-relevant training materials for in-service teachers.
- Utilize distance learning technologies to provide services to both trainers and teachers.
Develop networks with local authorities and organizations to facilitate the work of teacher trainers across schools in remote areas.

A model called the “Lead-Teacher Model” was adopted as a vehicle for developing professional development, through partnership and collaboration between schools and organizations such as universities.

In the early years of integrating ICT into education in schools, most of the training programmes were designed to build the capacity of teachers who were assigned to teach computer courses (ICT teachers). These teachers had different subject backgrounds and demanded intensive training to be able to teach the courses.

Train-the-trainer workshops were held in which well-skilled ICT teachers from schools all over the country were recruited to be lead trainers. These teacher trainers provided training to other teachers both in their own and other schools in their area. By 1995, there was a lead teacher trainer in each province.

Case 2: Teacher Deployment and Management in Pakistan

Source: UNESCO, 2006, pp. 16-18

Pakistan has a system and chain of accountability that is revised and modified periodically to serve the needs of the country. The present system of local government i.e. district nazim, district coordination officer and executive district officer (education and literacy) was introduced in 2001 under a devolution plan. Under this plan, education planning, management, and monitoring and evaluation were decentralized to the district level.

Under the decentralized education system, accountability to beneficiaries and local groups has increased to some extent. There is a wider participation beyond the government. A number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international development partners, and support organizations such as the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), Deeni Madaris, the private sector and individuals in civil society are now taking active roles in the promotion of education and literacy in the country. Moreover, education foundations at the federal and provincial levels have been established to promote education through public-private partnerships. Information is gathered and used for the purposes of accountability through the executive district officer, sub-district officer, learning coordinator
and head teacher within the education department. Outside the education department the information for accountability is collected through Village Education Committees or School Management Councils, nazims and councillors under local government as well as through media.

However, it has been observed that the new system is facing certain problems such as a shortage of qualified personnel, facilities and services, and ambiguity in functions, responsibility and authority.

The system is evaluated on the basis of results of the promotion exams. Additionally, research and evaluation studies and surveys are also conducted to evaluate the system - especially to assess the quality of education. The Punjab Education Department developed a standard manual to evaluate the system. A new system for monitoring and evaluation was also introduced in each district of Punjab for validation and evaluation.

Case 3: School Education Quality Assurance in Viet Nam

Source: World Bank, 2009

The objective of the School Education Quality Assurance Program (SEQAP) Project for Viet Nam is to improve learning outcomes and education completion for primary education students, particularly disadvantaged primary education students, through supporting the government’s full-day schooling (FDS) reform programme.

There are four components to the project: (1) to improve the policy framework; (2) to improve human resources (support the training and professional development of teachers, school leaders and education managers to successfully move toward FDS in the provinces, with a focus on teaching methods, teacher standards and school management); (3) to improve school facilities and resources (support the upgrade of infrastructure and facilities and support recurrent expenditures as needed in about 1,730 schools to successfully move to FDS, with related decentralized capacity building for effective school construction and preparation of the FDS plans); and (4) to support the management of SEQAP to ensure smooth implementation and results on the ground.
LEARNING FROM THE CASES:

1. Why do you think the Lead-Teacher Model was adopted in Thailand (Case 1)? What would be the critical components to make this a success?

2. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the decentralization of teacher management in the Pakistan case? What are the key issues that need to be addressed by microplanners?

3. What are the four components of the quality assurance programme in the Vietnam case?
EVALUATION TASKS

- Why do we need to establish curriculum development teams at schools and what are their major tasks?
- How can schools ensure that curriculum planning activities are carried out properly and achieve the expected learning outcomes?
- What are some practical ways to help schools make use of curriculum evaluation data to inform curriculum planning and classroom practices? What types of data would you recommend for this purpose?
- Can you identify the most needed knowledge, strategies and skills for teachers to enhance student learning in your own country, district or school?
- What are the key issues in developing and enhancing teacher quality?


Park University. *Faculty Resources Quick Tips: Incorporating Authentic Assessment*. http://www.park.edu/cetl/quicktips/authassess.html


