LANGUAGE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW

Meeting 1

Why is it important to learn Curriculum Development?

- Being an effective teacher meant much more than becoming a more skillful and knowledgeable classroom practitioner.

- Effective teaching is dependent on understanding the context for teaching, the needs of teachers and learners, the careful planning of courses and materials, as well as the monitoring of teaching and learning.

- It is important, therefore, to understand teaching as a part of an interrelated set of factors and processes that are often referred to as curriculum development

(Richards, 2001)

WHAT IS CURRICULUM?

- One description of curriculum distinguishes it into six levels according to their distance from learners:

1) The societal level curriculum describes what is mandated for study at national level.

2) The intended or written curriculum is a normative statement of intent for a course or whole programme.

WHAT IS CURRICULUM?

3) The planned curriculum results from teachers' interactions with the written curriculum, their own theories of practice and contextual opportunities and constraints.

4) The instructional or implemented curriculum is the one that teachers take in to the classroom to negotiate and construct with learners, working with various dynamic constraints and opportunities.
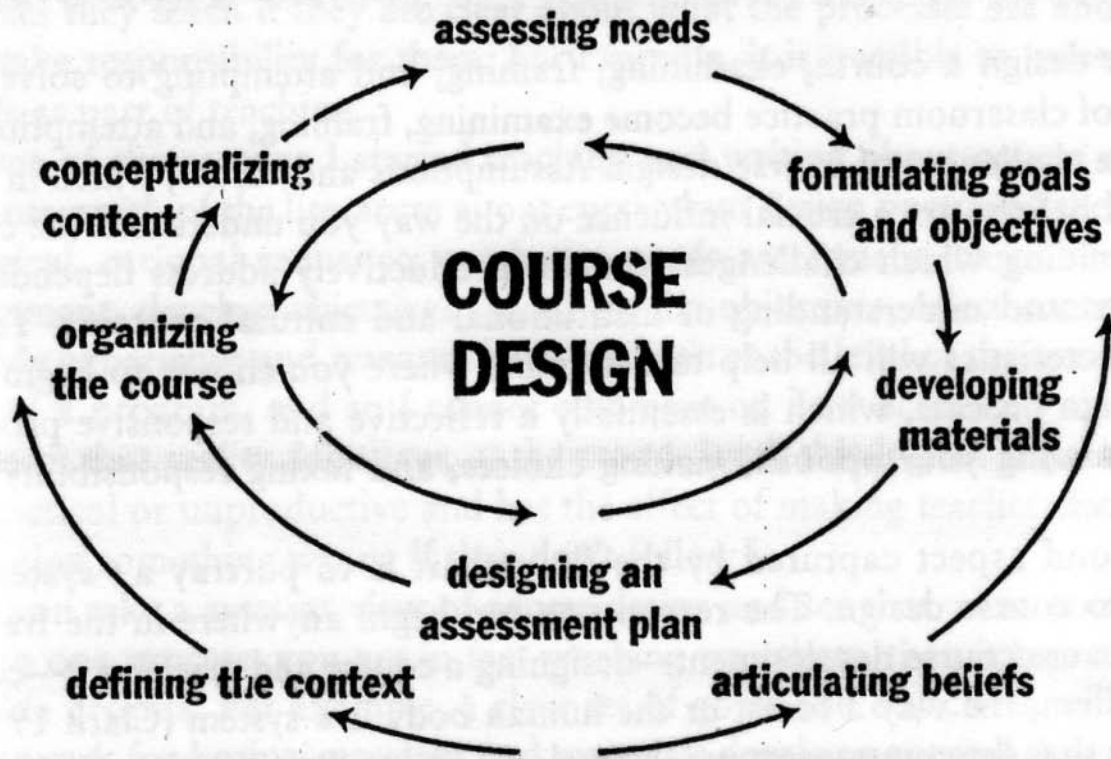
WHAT IS CURRICULUM?

5) The received or experiential curriculum is the one that learners experience and from which they construct their understandings.

6) The learned or achieved curriculum describes the portion of the received curriculum that learners actually take up and learn.
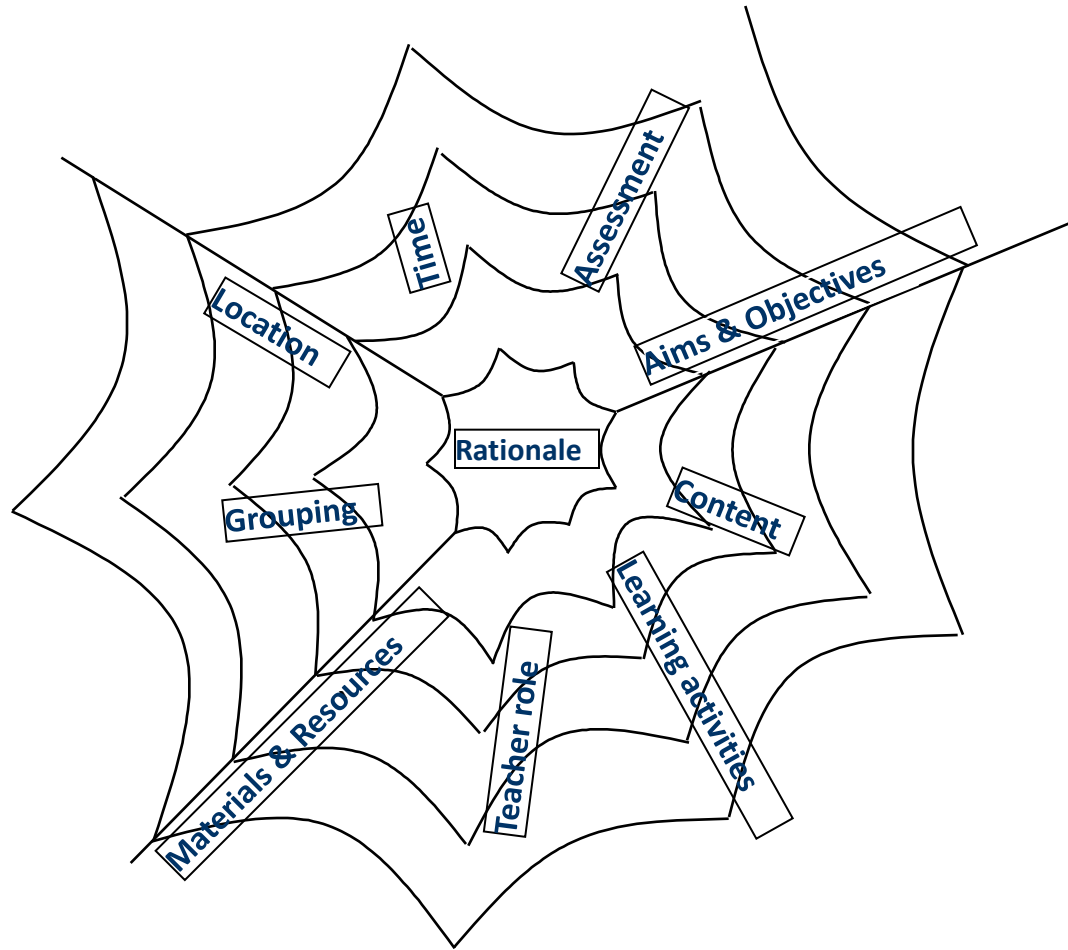
SO, WHAT IS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT?

❑ Curriculum development is an essentially practical activity to improve the quality of language teaching through the use of systematic planning, development, and review practices in all aspects of a language program.

❑ The process of curriculum development covers determining learners' needs, developing aims or objectives to address the needs, determining an appropriate syllabus, course structure, teaching methods, and materials, and carrying out an evaluation of the language program that results from these activities.

Figure 1.1: A Framework of Course Development Processes

assessing needs

conceptualizing content

formulating goals and objectives

COURSE DESIGN

organizing the course

developing materials

designing an assessment plan

defining the context

articulating beliefs

Curricular spider web

Questions to ponder in Curriculum Development

- What procedures can be used to determine the content of a language program?

- What are learners' needs?

- How can learners' needs be determined?

- What contextual factors need to be considered in planning a language program?

- What is the nature of aims and objectives in teaching and how can these be developed?

# Questions to ponder in Curriculum Development

- What factors are involved in planning the syllabus and the units of organization in a course?

- How can good teaching be provided in a program?

- What issues are involved in selecting, adapting, and designing instructional materials?

- How can one measure the effectiveness of a language program?

Some Consequences for being Curricula Developers

- Formulating, developing, and managing their own teaching-learning process:

✓ **Aims & objectives**

- – Specify general aims for the lessons series and specific objectives per lesson unit for each grade level

- – Reflect on national standards

  - Learning outcomes
  - Assessment standards
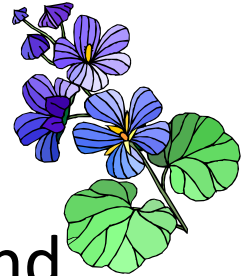
Some Consequences for being Curricula Developers

- **Content**
  - Specify themes and topics for the lesson series
  - Reflect on conceptual consistency (between themes) and sequencing between grade levels

- **Learning activities & Teacher role**
  - Specify what activities are expected from the learner and how these are supported by the teacher
  - Reflect on balance between
    - Whole-class activities (eg. Introduction/closing of the lesson)
    - Activities in grade groups
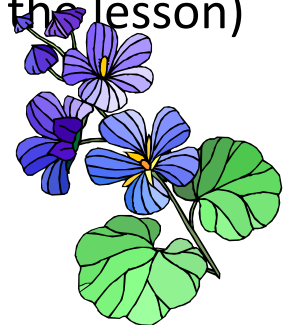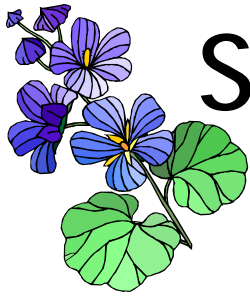
Some Consequences for being Curricula Developers

- **Materials & resources**
  - Specify what materials and resources are needed to conduct the lesson
  - Reflect on what is available in schools and how parts of existing textbooks can be used as inspiration and/or background for the lesson materials?

- **Grouping**
  - Specify how pupils are to be grouped during the lessons

- **Location**
  - Specify where pupils will be grouped during the lesson

- **Time**
  - Specify the time available for the different lesson elements
  - Reflect on time available for whole class instruction, individual (independent) work, individual coaching of students

- **Assessment**
  - Specify how learners' progress will be tested

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- The history of curriculum development in LT starts with the notion of syllabus design.

- Syllabus design is one aspect of curriculum development; it is the process of developing a syllabus.

- A syllabus is a specification of the content of a course of instruction and lists what will be taught and tested.

- Syllabus has undergone the evolution as it has followed the changes of approaches and methods underlying it.

ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING EARLY APPROACHES TO SYLLABUS DESIGN

- The basic units of language are vocabulary and grammar

- Learners everywhere have the same needs

- Learners' needs are identified exclusively in terms of language needs

- The process of learning a language is largely determined by the textbook

- The context of teaching is English as a foreign language