



CURRICULUM FOR THE DEAF

DR. SHARMISTA

Associate Professor
Dept. of Studies in Education
BGS. B .Ed. College
University of Mysore
Manasagangothri, Mysore – 06
Karnataka, INDIA

ABSTRACT

The term curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. Depending on how broadly educators define or employ the term, curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning. An individual teacher's curriculum, for example, would be the specific learning standards, lessons, assignments, and materials used to organize and teach a particular course. The deaf are those who cannot hear. The teachers of the deaf children spend a lot of time thinking about, studying, discussing, and analyzing curriculum, and many educators of the deaf have acquired a specialist's expertise in curriculum development—i.e., they know how to structure, organize, and deliver lessons in ways that facilitate or accelerate deaf students learning. To noneducators, some curriculum materials may seem simple or straightforward such as a list of required reading, but they may reflect a deep and sophisticated understanding of an academic discipline and of the most effective strategies for learning acquisition and classroom management.

INTRODUCTION

In education a **curriculum** is broadly defined as the totality of student experiences that occur in the educational process (Kelly, A.V.,2009,and Wiles,J.,2008). The term often refers specifically to a planned sequence of instruction, or to a view of the student's experiences in terms of the educator's or schools instructional goals. In a 2003 study Reys, Reys, Lapan, Holliday and Wasman refer to curriculum as a set of learning goals articulated across grades that outline the intended mathematics content and process goals at particular points in time throughout the K–12 school program. Curriculum may incorporate the planned interaction of pupils with instructional content, materials, resources, and processes for evaluating the

attainment of educational objectives (Adams, K. L., and Adams, D.E., 2003). Curriculum is split into several categories, the explicit, the implicit (including the hidden), the excluded and the extra-curricular (Dewey, J., 1902). The hearing impairment or an auditory disability having educational significance exists, when a defect in one or more parts of the ear and its associated nerve pathways leading from the ear to the brain prevents the child from adequately hearing, perceiving or attending to either faint speech, ordinary conversational speech or loud speech. The term "hearing impaired" or deafness is used to indicate all learners with a hearing loss who are handicapped to such an extent that some form of special education is required for the proper development of the child. If an individual with a hearing loss is able to receive language aurally, that is by hearing it, either with or without amplification, that individual is functionally "hard of hearing" on the other hand, if that person is unable to understand speech aurally, even with amplification, that person is usually referred to as 'deaf'. Since curriculum is one of the foundational elements of effective schooling and teaching, it is often the object of reforms, in deaf education. Schools may try to improve curriculum quality by bringing teaching activities and course expectations into "alignment" with learning standards of the deaf children. The basic idea is to create a more consistent and coherent academic program by making sure that teachers teach the most important content and eliminate learning gaps that may exist between the normal hearing and deaf children.

Developing curriculum for the deaf:

The curriculum for the deaf should aim to give a good balance between developing academic skills and supporting pupils' personal and social development. The curriculum for the deaf should be based on the following principles

- Sources of specialized materials for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- The procedures and technologies required to educate students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Subject matter and practices used in general education across content areas.
- Ways to facilitate cognitive and communicative development in students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (e.g., visual saliency).
- Techniques of stimulation and utilization of residual hearing in students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Research supported instructional strategies and practice for teaching students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Select, design, produce, and utilize media, materials, and resources required to educate students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Infuse speech skills into academic areas.
- Modify instructional process and classroom environment to meet the physical, cognitive, cultural, and communication needs of the child who is Deaf/Hard of

Hearing (e.g., teachers's style, acoustic environment, availability of support services, availability of appropriate technologies).

- Apply first and second language teaching strategies (e.g., sign language) appropriate to the needs of the individual student who is Deaf/Hard of Hearing .
- Communication features (visual, spatial, tactile, and/or auditory) salient to the learner who is Deaf/Hard of Hearing which are necessary to enhance cognitive, emotional and social development.
- Provide appropriate activities for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing to promote literacy in English and/or ASL.

Curriculum Plans:

Early years

- The acquisition of language must begin as early as possible at home and in school following identification of a pupil's deafness. The curriculum is based on a continuous cycle of observations and assessments of children's learning - these form the basic structure of the planning.
- Plan opportunities for children to develop the skills and knowledge that will form the basis of their education. The three characteristics of effective learning: active learning, playing and exploring and creating and thinking critically should be considered. In every day sessions the children should be encouraged to pursue their own learning journeys and develop activities themselves.
- The children should have access to areas for creativity, writing, mark-making, maths, role play and a secure outdoor area, all of which are accessible all day. There are designated, adult-led activities in writing, reading and maths which are individually planned according to need.
- Begin phonics sessions based on the Letters and Sounds document and use visual phonics by hand to support this. Weekly activities should be based around a theme and there are opportunities for the children's interests to be included in planning and for the children themselves to suggest activities.
- There is a focus on developing language, independence and social skills and occasions where we take time to discuss events in the children's lives and those in the wider world - the children are encouraged to share their opinion and take account of the views of others.
- The children are expected to choose their own resources, available through open access shelving and storage. We develop questioning skills in the children so that they can ask for help, as well as further their learning by asking about what they see, learn and experience.

Primary

Deafness, in itself, is not a barrier, or obstacle, to learning and that every pupil deserves to have the highest of expectations for achievement. The curriculum offered to primary pupils includes

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Sign Language (BSL)
- Deaf Studies
- Physical Education
- Personal, Social, Health Education
- ICT
- Art
- Design and Technology
- History
- Geography

Aim to develop strategies to meet the needs of all pupils including those with additional needs. The delivery of the curriculum is similar to the Early Years approach where the children have adult-led activities in writing, reading and maths, then time to complete independent activities based around a theme which cover all the foundation subjects. Literacy and Numeracy Strategies should be designed to develop skills at every level.

Literacy

Pupils learn in small groups. Most mornings begin with Phonics. Using the two-handed fingerspelling alphabet as a starting point, it capitalises on the ability many young deaf children have. It offers a quick tool to show the phonemes in English speech and spelling. Every primary classroom should have a reading corner and reading should be encouraged throughout the school. Progress is carefully monitored. Parents are welcome to arrange to meet staff and discuss planning and assessments. Literacy and Phonics are closely supported by Speech Therapist.

Numeracy

Hands-on experiences are invaluable to pupils in their learning. Numeracy goes beyond the recall of number facts. Confidence in mental calculations helps pupils to transfer strategies to new situations. Pupils are encouraged to question and discuss mathematical concepts to develop their own thinking as they tackle a range of maths problems. Literacy, numeracy and IT skills are fundamental to lifelong success.

Science

Science is an essential underpinning to modern society and an exciting way to understand and learn about the world. All pupils participate in science lessons.

- Give them a wider awareness of how many parts of life work - from ourselves and our bodies to the latest technology - as well as promote the curiosity and questioning that will allow them to be confident and informed citizens in adult life.
- Working together in small groups and using a properly equipped laboratory and specialist science teachers, lessons are made as enjoyable and as hands-on as possible, developing pupils' curiosity and broadening their understanding and vocabulary, underpinned by highly visual learning.

Humanities (Geography and History)

- Offer opportunities in geography for the primary children to gain an understanding about their surroundings and the variety of human and physical conditions on the Earth's surface. The experience of pupils stimulates a sense of wonder at the beauty of the world around them. Geography helps children develop an informed concern about the quality of the environment and the future of the human habitat and enhance their sense of responsibility for the care of the Earth and its people. Pupils learn about the physical and human features of their own environment.
- Encourage children to ask questions and develop their geographical enquiry skills. History is about the lives and lifestyles of familiar people in the people in the recent past and about famous people and events in the more distant past

Art and design

Art and design is about developing children's creativity and imagination through providing art, craft and design activities that relate to children's own identity and experiences, the natural and man-made objects and materials with which they are familiar and the locality in which they live.

Pupils will:

- explore the visual, tactile and sensory qualities of materials and processes and begin to understand and use colour, shape, space, pattern and texture to represent their own ideas and feelings

- focus on the work of artists, craftspeople and designers by asking and answering questions like: 'What is it like?' 'What is it made from?' 'How is it made?' 'What do I think and feel about it?'

Art and design is about developing children's creativity and imagination by building on their knowledge, skills and understanding of materials and processes through providing more complex activities. Children's experiences help them to develop their understanding of the diverse roles and functions of art and design in the locality and in the wider world.

Pupils will:

- improve their control of materials, tools and techniques and become more confident in using visual and tactile elements, materials and processes to communicate what they see, feel and think
- increase their critical awareness of the roles and purposes of art in different times and cultures by commenting on works and asking questions like: 'What is this work about?' 'Why was it made - for what purpose?' 'What visual and tactile elements are used?' 'How are they combined and organised?' 'What materials and processes were used to make it?' 'How are these matched to the purpose of the work?' 'When and where was it made?' 'What do I think and feel about it?'

Design and technology

Pupils work in a fully equipped workshop with a high staff to pupil ratio and enjoy designing and making for a wide variety of projects.

Aims and purposes of design and technology

Design and technology offers opportunities for children to:

- develop their designing and making skills
- develop knowledge and understanding
- develop their capability to create high quality products through combining their designing and making skills with knowledge and understanding
- nurture creativity and innovation through designing and making
- explore values about and attitudes to the made world and how we live and work within it
- develop an understanding of technological processes and products and their manufacture and contribution to our society.

Content of design and technology

In design and technology, children acquire and apply knowledge and understanding of:

- materials and components
- mechanisms and control systems
- structures
- existing products
- quality
- health and safety.

Secondary

English

- Aim to develop and extend our students' learning and understanding in reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Include a variety of research, reading and writing tasks linked to fiction books, poetry, autobiographies, plays, media, myths and legends among others.
- Pupils are encouraged to plan, draft and write short stories to develop their sentence structure, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Provide opportunities for them to explore their creativity and imagination when writing.
- Aim to develop pupils' understanding of different forms of writing such as writing to persuade, inform, argue, describe and compare. Provide a variety of texts (fiction and non-fiction) to improve reading skills. e aim to help pupils develop their functional skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening which they will use in real life situations. These include writing informal and formal letters, reading notices and posters, writing emails, completing application forms and holding conversations linked to a variety of topics.

Maths

- Independent young people need mathematics for everyday life. Focus on mental arithmetic with an emphasis on calculating money and helping pupils understand timetables.
- Plan timings of events and being punctual for appointments.
- Pupils learn the use of measure and shape to give them the foundations needed to undertake everyday household tasks like weighing ingredients for cooking or measuring.
- Follow an academic curriculum that includes visual and hands-on maths to support deaf pupils' preferred learning styles.

In order to develop mathematical thinking and problem solving, support pupils to increase their confidence with the language and literacy skills needed to discuss often abstract concepts.

Science

Science is an essential underpinning to modern society and an exciting way to understand and learn about the world. All our pupils participate in science lessons and we hope to give them a wider awareness of how many parts of life work - from ourselves and our bodies to the latest technology - as well as promote the curiosity and questioning that will allow them to be confident and informed citizens in adult life.

ICT

The School should have a Learning Resource Centre combining the school library and the main ICT facilities. This is a spacious area, fully equipped with computers and the technology needed to support pupils with special needs.

The School uses all relevant software to allow pupils to access the ICT curriculum and, where possible, freeware programs to encourage pupils to engage in ICT at home with no cost implications.

Pupils are taught skills such as data handling, spreadsheets, presentations and Computer Aided Design.

History

All pupils follow the general Curriculum for History in weekly lessons with a subject specialist teacher of the deaf.

Geography

Geography is in accordance with the general Curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to develop their map skills as well as their knowledge of the local, national environment and the wider world.

ART

- Regularly organize trips to local art galleries and museums to broaden pupils' experience of art in the community and allow them to practice life skills, both on public transport and within public buildings.

- Design and make props for school productions, using various crafts for seasonal celebrations and involves children in workshops.

Careers Education and Guidance

Aim to provide pupils with balanced, impartial careers advice supported by local services to help pupils make self-directed decisions about their future in further education, training or employment.

Conclusion

The curriculum for the deaf should include four basic components namely, goals: the benchmarks or expectations for teaching and learning, often made explicit in the form of a scope and sequence of skills to be addressed; methods: specific instructional methods for the teacher, materials: The media and tools that are used for teaching and learning;. Assessment: the reasons for and methods of measuring student progress. These guidelines apply to the general education curriculum which, when universally designed, should meet the educational needs of most students, including those with children with deafness.

REFERENCES

- Adams, Kathy L.; Adams, Dale E. (2003). Urban Education: A Reference Handbookp 31–32. ISBN 9781576073629
- Dewey, J. (1902). The Child and the Curriculum (pp. 1–31). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kelly, A. V. (2009). The curriculum: Theory and practice (pp. 1–55). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Reys, Robert; Reys, Barbara; Lapan, Richard; Holliday, Gregory; Wasman, Deanna (2003). "Assessing the Impact of Standards-Based Middle Grades Mathematics Curriculum Materials on Student Achievement". Journal for Research in Mathematics Education: 74–95.
- Wiles, Jon (2008) Leading Curriculum Development. p. 2. ISBN9781412961417.
- Reys, Robert; Reys, Barbara; Lapan, Richard; Holliday, Gregory; Wasman, Deanna (2003). "Assessing the Impact of Standards-Based Middle Grades Mathematics Curriculum Materials on Student Achievement". Journal for Research in Mathematics Education: 74–95.