

## Different Meanings of "Curriculum"

International Bureau of Education. (n.d.). Different Meanings of "Curriculum". Retrieved from <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/gegaf/annexes/technical-notes/different-meanings-%E2%80%9Ccurriculum%E2%80%9D>

Curriculum can be envisaged from different perspectives. What societies envisage as important teaching and learning constitutes the "intended" curriculum. Since it is usually presented in official documents, it may be also called the "written" and/or "official" curriculum. However, at classroom level this intended curriculum may be altered through a range of complex classroom interactions, and what is actually delivered can be considered the "implemented" curriculum. What learners really learn (i.e. what can be assessed and can be demonstrated as learning outcomes/learner competencies) constitutes the "achieved" or "learned" curriculum. In addition, curriculum theory points to a "hidden" curriculum (i.e. the unintended development of personal values and beliefs of learners, teachers and communities; unexpected impact of a curriculum; unforeseen aspects of a learning process). Those who develop the intended curriculum should have all these different dimensions of the curriculum in view. While the "written" curriculum does not exhaust the meaning of curriculum, it is important because it represents the vision of the society. The "written" curriculum should therefore be expressed in comprehensive and user-friendly documents, such as curriculum frameworks; subject curricula/syllabuses, and in relevant and helpful learning materials, such as textbooks; teacher guides; assessment guides.

In some cases, people see the curriculum entirely in terms of the subjects that are taught, and as set out within the set of textbooks, and forget the wider goals of competencies and personal development. This is why a curriculum framework is important. It sets the subjects within this wider context, and shows how learning experiences within the subjects need to contribute to the attainment of the wider goals.

All these documents and the issues they refer to form a "curriculum system". Given their guiding function for education agents and stakeholders, clear, inspired and motivational curriculum documents and materials play an important role in ensuring education quality. The involvement of stakeholders (including and especially teachers), in the development of the written curriculum is of paramount importance for ensuring ownership and sustainability of curriculum processes.