

Rationalization of School Curriculum

Background

The conventional teacher centred and rote learning form of education has served us well through ages. As the education system in Bhutan embraces the 21st Century education framework and principles, it warrants a paradigm shift in curriculum design and development, including the pedagogy, commensurate the competency based learning. An approach, which underscores that learning in the 21st century, is for the development of competencies through active engagement of learners in learning experiences, guided by formation and utilisation of “working knowledge”. This empowers learners to take responsibilities of their learning and develop “portable skills or soft skills,” such as critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration, vital for all as individuals with unique talent and competencies. The current culture of curriculum design and practices in schools, however, do not render condition to facilitate realisation of the national aspiration of nurturing “nationally rooted and globally competent” citizen.

Amongst others, it has always been a concern for REC on the extent, relevancy and quality of the curriculum in all subjects. Thus, in order to facilitate quality learning for 21st Century education, REC has initiated major curriculum reform in all subjects.

Rationale

The Bhutan Education Blueprint 2014-2024 indicated that the existing curriculum was ‘heavy’. This was echoed as one of the major pointers in the National School Curriculum Conference 2016 that the curriculum was ‘vast’. These findings led to the need for curriculum “thinning” [Resolution 3.1.10 (IV)]. In response to these findings, REC started the rationalization of the existing curriculum by reviewing and screening out the obsolete and irrelevant content, and updating them with the most recent information and also rectifying errors in the textbooks. Therefore, some portions of the syllabi from several subjects, for instance, have been dropped. The rationalization or thinning of curriculum is one of the important considerations made while developing new textbooks based on new curriculum frameworks.

The curriculum rationalization process also aligns very well with Resolution 13 of the National Education Conference 2018 of “Doing away with the Saturday classes”. The para 13.4 of the resolution requires ‘REC to work on curriculum thinning and review of time allocation for each subject’. This resolution has further facilitated REC to expedite the curriculum rationalization and review the time and period allocation for each subject.

Rationalization of the school curricula is based on the following strategies:

- i. Review the goals and outcomes of each subject to identify topics, chapters, learning activities, exercises and assessment.
- ii. Develop rationalized syllabus for each subjects ensuring conceptual linkages and progression within the chapter or topic in the textbooks.
- iii. Minimize lexical density in text by reducing heavy textual materials from the textbooks.

- iv. Remove topics, learning activities or assessment items, which are redundant, overlapping irrelevant or inappropriate.
- v. Delete irrelevant or inappropriate illustrations or diagrams, and examples from the text.
- vi. Update and align the content width and depth with the teaching time available for each subject.
- vii. The revised syllabi for each subject are categorised and compiled under four subject classifications, namely STEM, Social Sciences, Language, and TVET & Commercial Studies.

The review of the instructional time allocation is based on the following criteria:

- i. Maintain the instructional time requirement at the international standard.
- ii. Maintain gradual increase of instructional time across most of the key stages.
- iii. Reduce the instructional time for each subject across the grades based on the doing away of the Saturday classes.
- iv. Allocate time for personal development learning areas, such as HPE, Arts Education, Values Education, CGC, TVET Program (clubs and PVOP).
- v. Non-curricular activities and programmes are to be conducted outside the instructional hours.
- vi. Calculate 150 actual curricular instructional days (excluding examination days in June and November months) in an academic year based on 5 working days per week.
- vii. Calculation of instructional time is based on 8 periods a day of 40 minutes each.

Conclusion

Instructional time refers to the actual contact time in the classroom. This is the minimum time available for the delivery of the curriculum including assessment. Instructional Time equals to number of days multiplied by number of periods per day times duration of one period (180 x 8 x 40). The rationalization of the curriculum is based on 150 days of the actual instructional time.

Instructional days are the total number of days within which the curricular activities are conducted. Within these days, a maximum of 5.33 hours (320 minutes) are available for actual classroom instruction per day. This calculation is based on 8 periods a day of 40 minutes each. The average instructional time in the OECD countries ranges from 799 to 915 hours per year. This includes all the educational activities that happen in the school in a day. However, the calculation of instructional time for the rationalized curriculum is based on the actual contact time for curriculum delivery, which has resulted in more instructional time than in OECD countries.

Lastly, it must be noted that the instructional time and days are suggested guide. Thus, it is envisaged that schools will make adjustment in instructional time as deemed applicable.

Class: XI & XII**Subject: Media Studies**

Sl No	Strand/Unit/Chapter/Topic	Time (mins)	Weighting (%)	Changes	Reasons
	Class XI				<p>1. Overlapping or repetition of concepts, definitions, diagrams, tables and unnecessary explanation or examples across the chapters (horizontal) as well as across class level (vertical) were all streamlined during the review workshop conducted by Mr. Wangchuk Rabten in January, 2018. This was specifically done as a follow up of the feedback received from National School Curriculum Conference, 2016. One of the feedbacks were with regard to the bulkiness of the text book and repetition of several concepts and it's now taken care. The textbook review, consequently, resulted to the reduction of around 20 pages.</p> <p>2. On consultation with media teachers on the WeChat group, created mainly to discuss issues related to the media studies, no teachers shared any concern of syllabus coverage anymore, except that media textbook requires enough learning activities and questions.</p> <p>3. With the plan already in pipeline to rewrite media textbook during coming winter the slimming of textbook will be taken care should there be requirement of further thinning.</p>
1	Citizenship Education	864	12	Status quo	
2	Media and information	720	10	Status quo	
3	Media and Information Literacy	1080	15	Status quo	
4	Media and Language	1080	15	Status quo	
5	Representation in Media	792	11	Status quo	
6	Advertising	864	12	Status quo	
7	Internet Opportunities and Challenges	1080	15	Status quo	
8	Information and Library Skills	720	10	Status quo	
		7200	100		
	Class XII				
1	Understanding Traditional Bhutanese Media	1152	16	Status quo	
2	Traditional Media (TM) to New Media (NM)	1152	16	Status quo	
3	Journalist Code of Ethics and Research Ethics	1152	16	Status quo	
4	Media and Global Village	1152	16	Status quo	
5	Socio-political Media of Globalized Media	1152	16	Status quo	
6	Digital Editing	720	10	Status quo	
7	Right To Information (RTI)	720	10	Status quo	
		7200	100		