Interdependencies – Curriculum, Assessment and Pedagogy

A national policy perspective

Abigail Barnett
Deputy Director

8th December 2017
Interdependencies and the importance of alignment

Content and structure of this session:

- Understanding your system – its complexity and resilience
- Control factors and curriculum coherence
- Aspects of the curriculum
- The landscape of assessment
- Approaches to teaching and learning
- Next steps
Coherence at policy making level

“A system is regarded as ‘coherent’ when the national curriculum content, textbooks, teaching content, pedagogy, assessment and drivers and incentives are all aligned and reinforce one another.”

Tim Oates, CBE
Group Director for Assessment Research and Development, Cambridge Assessment
Coherence when managing your system

Analysis through the lens of “control factors” and “curriculum control (alignment)” point to the importance of careful management of the alignment of the different elements of each system, effected through constant monitoring and “fine tuning” – and abandonment or revision of those innovations and changes which initially appeared to hold promise but which monitoring suggests are not working.”
The elements of an education system

- Selection
- Professional development
- Institutional structures
- Governance
- Pedagogy
- Information and guidance
- Institutional development
- Curriculum
- Accountability
- Allied social measures
- Inspection
- Funding
- National Framework
- Assessment
Control and policy instruments

- Studies have shown that control is necessary to promote coherence
- Control need not come from top-down measures
- Elements of the system should interact in ways that reinforce each other
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum manifestation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The intended curriculum</td>
<td>Sets out what learner should know, understand and be able to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The enacted or taught curriculum</td>
<td>What is happening in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assessed curriculum</td>
<td>What are learners tested on as a measure of their performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learned curriculum</td>
<td>What learners actually learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hidden curriculum</td>
<td>The experience of being in school, including ethos and culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## How is the curriculum articulated and where?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum specification options</th>
<th>Present in current system?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>national standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curriculum ‘frameworks’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aims statements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject specifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>textbooks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schemes of work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject discipline models/domain specifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject sequencing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject combination criteria/baccalaureate models</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once all the sources of curriculum specification have been identified, it is then possible to evaluate the current approach to curriculum development, progression and structure.
Think about your experience of curriculum in your current context.

Can you come up with examples of good alignment?

Are there any examples of misalignments in your context and any issues this may be causing?
The assessment landscape

- Map the totality of the assessments that a student will experience

- Consider all types of assessment experienced e.g.
  - formal high-stakes summative assessments
  - internal school assessments
  - informal continuous assessments etc
When considering optimal design characteristics for future assessment systems it is necessary to bear in mind the underlying purposes of those systems. The fact that a system which is fit for one purpose will not necessarily be fit for all purposes is a fundamental consideration when evaluating the legitimacy of proposals. It is one of the most important messages for policy-makers to understand.

(Newton 2007)
Coherence of assessments

- Peer / self assessment
- Class test
- School based assessments
- Teacher assessments
- Secure summative assessments

Cambridge Assessment International Education
Discussion

- Think about your experience of the assessment landscape in your current context.

- Can you come up with examples of good alignment?

- Are there any examples of misalignments in your context and any issues this may be causing?
Influences on the classroom context

Broader culture/society – (macro)

School culture - (meso)

Classroom - (micro)

- Teacher accountability
- National or local government policy
- Curriculum
- Qualification framework
- Learners
- Teacher
- Agency
- Professional development
- School leadership

Teacher: content knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; attitudes and beliefs
Learner: knowledge; engagement; willingness to participate
How can we encourage and support teachers to change?

- What did I choose to do?
- How did I plan?
- What activities did I use?

- What new ideas should I try next?
- What went well?
- What activities were engaging?
- What feedback did I get (both verbal and non-verbal)?

- What did I choose to do?
- How did I plan?
- What activities did I use?

- Active experimentation
  - What did I choose to do?
  - How did I plan?
  - What activities did I use?
  - What new ideas should I try next?

- Concrete experience
  - What went well?
  - What activities were engaging?
  - What feedback did I get (both verbal and non-verbal)?

- Reflection
  - What went well?
  - What activities were engaging?
  - What feedback did I get (both verbal and non-verbal)?

- Abstract conceptualisation
  - What went well?
  - What activities were engaging?
  - What feedback did I get (both verbal and non-verbal)?

Figure 2: Kolb’s cycle of experiential learning. Based on Kolb (1984)
Discussion

➢ Think about teaching and learning in your current context

➢ Can you come up with examples of good alignment?

➢ Are there any examples of misalignments in your context and any issues this may be causing?
Thank you
Any questions?