CURRICULUM EVALUATION

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The process of evaluation is undertaken in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of an existing or an under-construction curriculum so that improvements can be made in curriculum design. Evaluation results are primarily a function of judging the effectiveness of the curriculum.

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An integral part of such a development process is evaluation . Here, evaluation means both assessment of students to find how much of the intended curriculum has been transacted and also what actually happens in a classroom as experienced by the students when they are involved in learning activities. These experiences of the students need not be confined to the four walls of a classroom and within the stipulated time frame of a rigid school schedule. These could also include activities which form part of hidden curriculum like wearing a school uniform, standing up when the teacher enters the class and helping each other in organizing an exhibition in the school.
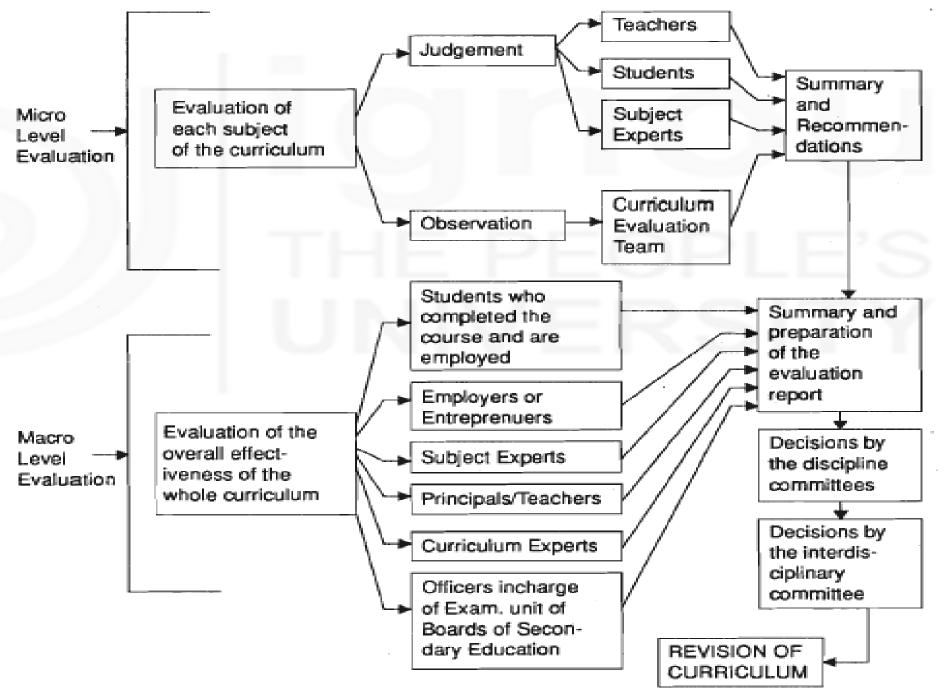
Fig. 4.1 : Curriculum Evaluation Process

CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Evaluation is meant to gauge the extent to which the objectives of the curriculum are achieved through implementation of curriculum.

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Objectives

⬇

Activities

⬇

Evaluation

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Relationship of Objectives with Evaluation Fig.

CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM EVALUATION

- So, objectives of a curriculum are stated, the ways of evaluating the attainment of the objectives should be decided. The content and learning experiences are there in order to achieve the objectives and also with reference to the possible means of evaluation.

- The effectiveness of any educational programme is judged by its potential to realise its goals and objectives.The extent to which the objectives are achieved can be assessed through appropriate evaluation procedures.The evaluation of any purposeful activity should have certain characteristics.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CURRICULUM EVALUTION

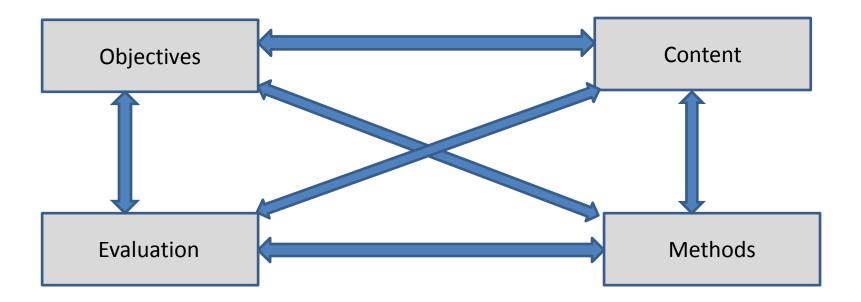The important characteristics are as follows:

- Consistency with objectives of the curriculum
- Sufficient diagnostic value
- Comprehensiveness
- Validity
- Continuity

IMPORTANT POINTS

- Evaluation is both qualitative and quantitative, i.e. it may be 'formative' (with the objective improving the process of development) and 'summative' (at the end of the total programme or each phase thereof to judge the effectiveness of the instructional design.)

- Curriculum evaluation refers to the evaluation of different components of curriculum: objectives, content, methods and evaluation procedures for student assessment to determine whether the curriculum caters to the needs and the educational purposes of the target group.

- Curriculum components can not be scrutinized in isolation, since each component affects and influences the rest. Since these components are interdependent, each has to be evaluated in conjunction with the others. The overall curriculum evaluation is shown in Figure.

INTERDEPENDENCE OF CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

The purpose of curriculum evaluation is to collect and use feedback for improving the curriculum. None of us would dispute the importance of curriculum evaluation, yet we carry it out very rarely. There are two major reasons for this indifference:

- Evaluation results are frequently ignored, and
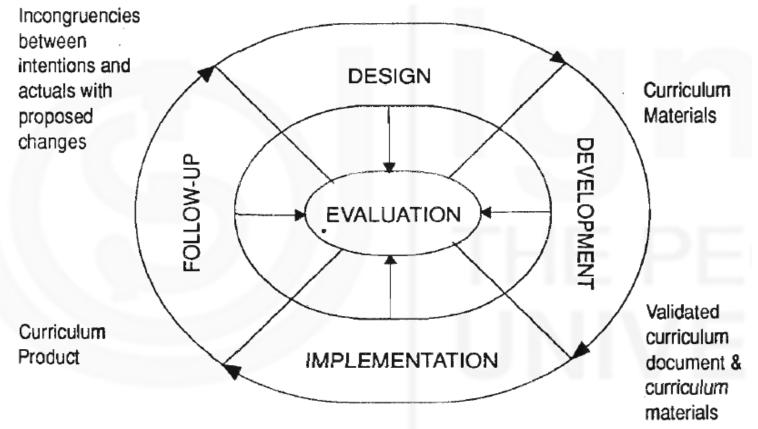- Resistance to accept a new pattern despite its potential continues to exist.

Since evaluation data are crucial for the improvement of curriculum, it is essential that we should come to grips with the issues underlying it.

CURRICULUM EVALUATION

The curriculum evaluation process is not a one-shot affair. It is rather a dynamic and cyclic process. Curriculum evaluation plays its role in all stages of the curriculum cycle.

The curriculum cycle shows that curriculum evaluation is a comprehensive activity. It should be frequent and recurrent. It is needed at almost every stage of Curriculum design and implementation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF CURRICULUM CYCLE

NEED OF CURRICULUM EVALUATION

some important needs of Curriculum evaluation are as follows

- To develop a new curriculum
- To review a curriculum under implementation
- To remove '**dead wood**' and update an existing curriculum
- To find out the effectiveness of a curriculum

SOURCES OF CURRICULUM EVALUATION

- Students.
- Teachers.
- Subject experts
- Curriculum experts
- Policymakers
- Community
- Drop out samples
- Employers and entrepreneurs

ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM EVALUATION

- There are several aspects of Curriculum evaluation which makes the evaluation process a comprehensive activity. Some of these activities are as follows

- Pre testing /post testing

- Non reference testing and Criterion referenced testing

- Formative evaluation

PRE-TESTING AND POST-TESTING

This is one of the most commonly used aspects of evaluation of Curriculum.The procedure adopted is similar to that of a before-use and after-use strategy.

A test is devised to measure the terminal behaviour of students after they have covered a curriculum. Sometimes two parallel form of the test are developed as T1 and T2. One of these tests is administered on the students before they start on a particular course in order to assess the level of their knowledge or competence. Learner scores on pre-test reveal the status of the student again the set criteria or the expected terminal behaviour.

The students are then exposed to the curriculum experiences as planned and at the end they are given to the second test. The difference between the test score of pre-test and post-test is attributed to the effectiveness of the curriculum and thus it is one way of evaluating the curriculum. If the improvements are substantial as expected by the curriculum framers, it established the strength of the curriculum. If there are some terminal behaviours that have not been achieved by many or even by one group of the students, it indicates that curriculum has to be modified. This pre-test and post-test can be diagrammatically represented as follows.

PRE-TESTING AND POST-TESTING OF CURRICULUM

PRE-TEST (T1) → CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION → POST-TEST (T2)

In many standardised curriculum materials you will find such provisions whereby you can assess student's Current Knowledge and skill in a particular area and then take up the course of concentrating on those aspects in which the student is weak and skipping certain portions where he/she is strong as revealed through the pre-test. Such structured curriculum is easy to adapt to a specific environment or situation. It can be modified according to the required specifications. Most of the Indian school curriculum are not so highly structured. Individualised learning kits for different School grades are also available, these kits have the inbuilt pre and post-tests. That can be used by the teachers.

NON-REFERENCED TESTING AND CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTING

Testing a curriculum can be done with reference to a set of criteria called criterion-referenced testing or in relation to a norm like a normal distribution called norms-referenced testing. Generally, in the Indian school system, we use norm-referenced tasting where the results of a test are used to compare two sets of Curriculum. On the basis of this type of testing, the curriculum can be ranked as high or low.

In criterion-referenced testing, all the objectives of a course are listed in behavioural terms specifying the conditions under which the criteria are to be observed and the level of acceptance with tolerance limits. On implementation of the curriculum if the objectives are attained to the specified level, it indicate the extent to which the curriculum has served its purpose. Comparing with a norm or standard, one can evaluate a curriculum for its attainment of objectives.

FORMATIVE EVALUATION

- Formative evaluation is carried out at two levels-

- Curriculum development process level (process evaluation) and

- Curriculum implementation level (product evaluation).

METHODS OF CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Methods of Curriculum evaluation are:

- Evaluation during curriculum development
- Evaluation during curriculum implementation

RECONSTRUCTING CURRICULUM

- Any given curriculum needs restructuring prior to its implementation. This restructuring can be done at a macro-level and micro-level. At the macro-level obsolete elements may be removed, recent developments in the field may be added and the sequence of content may be rearranged. At the micro level, a teacher may find the sequence of content suitable for a presentation. But if he or she wishes to have participative techniques of teaching, the sequence may not be suitable and so he or she would like to reorganize the sequence of the content to suit his/her mode of presentation. Such micro-level reorganization is often done by teachers who are innovative in their teaching approach. There could be as many ways of micro-level reorganization of Curriculum as there are teachers

RECONSTRUCTING CURRICULUM

- Pre-testing of restructured Curriculum
- Search for affirmative models for curriculum revision