

# “Curriculum Enhancement leads to develop Students’ Performance”

by Aye Aye Khine (First author)  
Khine Yin Mon (second author)  
Department of English  
University of computer Studies, Yangon

## Abstract

It is no doubt that schools and universities cannot exist a curriculum. An effective curriculum provides a quality education. In general, a curriculum should meet the needs of students in which the demands of the current situation .This paper is aimed for teachers, researchers, and students to have an awareness that curriculum development can implement some enhancements to students in their real life situation.. The University of Computer Studies, Yangon has conducted and changed the final year curriculum which can be applied in their intern programme. The outcome shows that students gain soft skills as well as hard skills.

**Key words:** curriculum development, enhancement, intern programme, quality education

## 1. Introduction

A curriculum plays a key role of developing the educational institutions. It can also be called “the heart” of the schools, colleges and universities. It provides teachers, students, administrators, and community for quality education.

Nowadays, when educational reforms are being established, curriculum development is prerequisite at institutions. In this occasion, teachers are main persons in developing, implementing, assessing and modifying the curriculum. Moreover, the curriculum identifies the learning outcomes and standards and competencies for students in their academic success. English for Specific Purposes plays a very useful role in the teaching-learning process at the tertiary level. In line with the change of economic policy, the demand for English has increased for the student’s knowledge in their specialized fields of study. So English for Specific Purposes is taught at professional institutes including University of Computer Studies.

The University of Computer Studies, Yangon, is affiliated with other twenty- four computer universities and the curriculum committee has been organized by representatives from all these universities.

English is compulsory and taught at all levels ( from first year to post graduated PhD. level). In recent years, the curriculum of English has been based on IELTS (International English Language Testing System). However, starting from last year, 2016-17 academic year, syllabus for the final year was changed to the communication skills , that is, 21<sup>st</sup> century communications. Further development in students' skills in technology, reading, writing, oral communication, and critical thinking will also be planned for advanced level.

In reality, students have completed, to some extent, hard skills in the classroom, but soft skills are needed to be taught to achieve success in their work place. In other words, curriculum development is associated with the development of a society, a community, or a country.

## **Chapter Two Theoretical Background**

It needs assuredly to know the theoretical knowledge of curriculum for those studying and learning in educational environment. Therefore, the questions here are:

1. What is curriculum?
2. What is curriculum development?
3. Why curriculum development is important?
4. What are the phases of designing the curriculum?

Moreover, for curriculum alignment, schools may try to improve curriculum quality by bringing teaching activities and course expectations into **alignment** with learning standards and other school courses - a practice sometimes called "curriculum mapping". The basic idea is to create an academic programme that is more consistent and coherent for teachers and students.

### ***2.1. What is curriculum?***

The curriculum is defined as in various ways by the educators and researchers, but in this paper, a simple way is described: the term "**curriculum**" refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or a program.

A typical curriculum means the knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn, including the learning standards or learning objectives; 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.

In addition, an individual teacher's curriculum would be the specific learning standards, lessons, assignments, and materials used to organize and to teach a particular course.

### ***2.2. What is curriculum development?***

Alvior Mary G. (G, Dec, 2014) described the meaning of curriculum development as follows: "Curriculum Development is defined as planned, purposeful, progressive, and systematic process to create positive improvements in the educational system."

Since changes or developments are happening every time around the world, the curricula for the schools are also affected. The curricula need changing in order to meet the students' needs as well as to address the society's needs. ( [https:// simplyeducate.me](https://simplyeducate.me))

### ***2.3. Why curriculum development is important?***

Curriculum development is related with not only schools, learners, teachers but the development of the community and society in general.

Nowadays, curriculum development plays a vital role for improving the economy of a country.

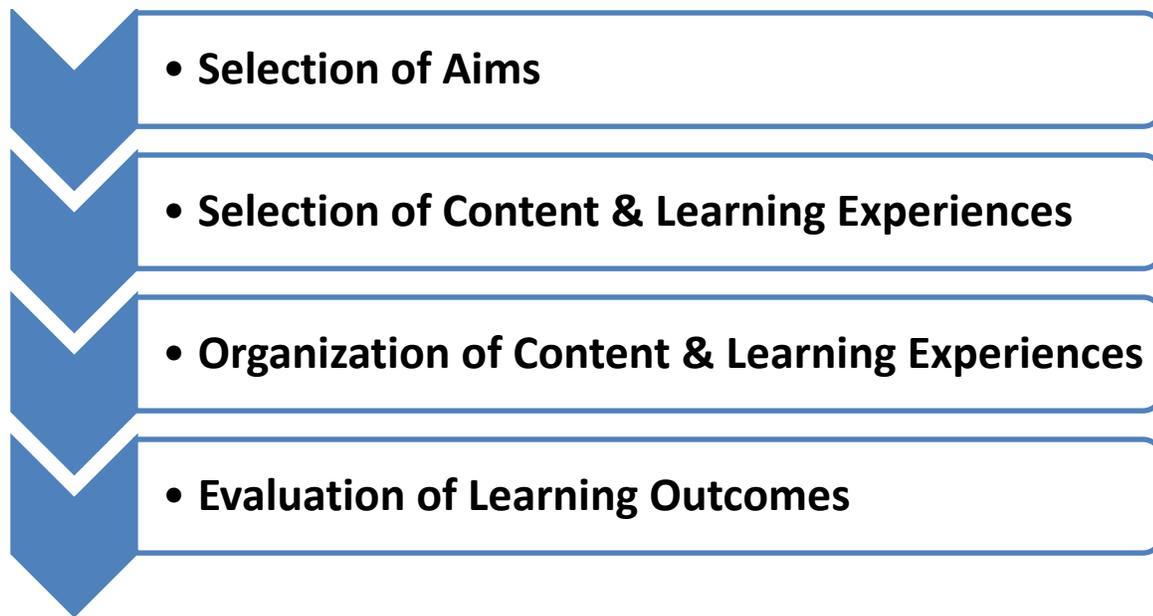
It can offer the solutions to the pressing conditions of the world such as politics, socio-economics, and other issues of environment, climate change, poverty, and sustainable development. ( [https:// simplyeducate.me](https://simplyeducate.me))

The school curriculum especially in higher education needs to be developed to identify the image of the country and to ensure its economy's growth and stability. Thus, the authorities must have a clear vision for designing a curriculum.

If universities have innovative and effective curriculum programs in the local and global market, even the foreign students will enroll to these universities. For example, Thailand, our neighboring country, could upgrade its educational system and offer post-graduated programmes to overseas students in some disciplines such as Buddhism, Medicine and Technology. A great number of enrollments from overseas can result in big income and it can be used for educational sector such as salaries of teachers, scholarships, and other facilities like libraries and laboratories. Therefore, it can be said that a country's economy can be raised by developing curricula of its schools and universities which produce the human resources.

### ***2.4. What are the phases of designing the curriculum?***

According to some curriculum experts like Tyler, there are four steps which follow a sequence or a straight line. The following model is called linear model. ( [https:// www. slideshare.net](https://www.slideshare.net))



**Figure 2.1. A linear model of curriculum decision making**

This linear model is the first type of model and it prescribes a rational step-by-step procedure for curriculum development starting with aims or objectives. ( Ralph Tyler, 1940)

It starts from selecting objectives to selecting learning experiences, organizing learning experiences and evaluation of learning outcomes.

He planned this model based on the following four steps:

- Determine the school's purposes ( objectives)
- Identify educational experiences related to purpose
- Organize the experiences
- Evaluate the purposes

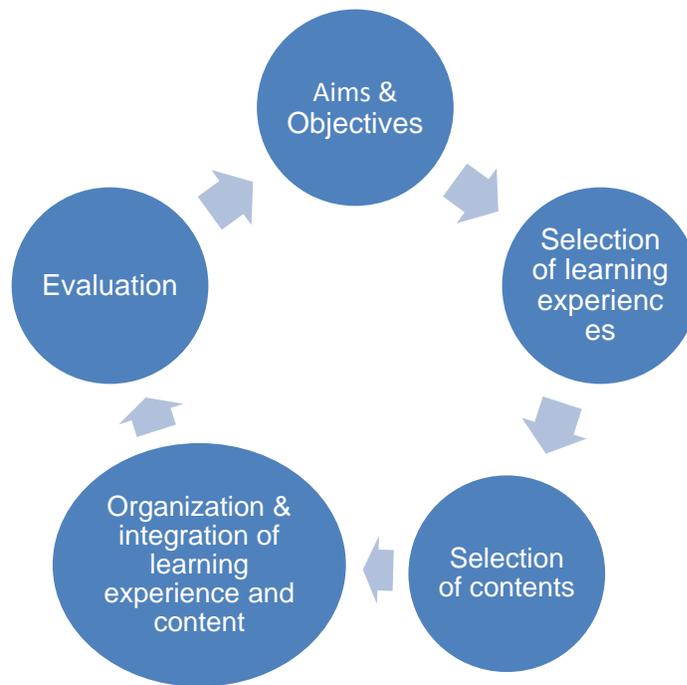
In step one. the objectives of the school is determined or what the students need to do are also considered. For example, a school that is developing an English curriculum may create an objective that students will write essays. This would be one of many objectives within the curriculum.

Step two develops learning experiences that help students to achieve step one. For example, if students need to meet the objectives of writing an essay, the learning experience may be a demonstration by the teacher of writing an essay. Then the students might practise. The experience is consistent with the objective.

Step three is organization of learning experiences. The teacher should determine that demonstration is first or writing by students immediately is second. Either way can work. The point is that the teacher needs to determine a logical order of experiences for the students.

The last step is evaluation step. The teacher can evaluate or assess the ability of the students to write an essay. There are many ways to evaluate. For example, the teacher can make students write an essay without assistance. If they can do this, it can be said that the students have achieved the objective of the lesson.

And another model, according to the expert (Wheeler 1978), curriculum decision making can begin with any point and can come back to any of the points, for example, like a cycle.



**Figure 2.2.A cycle model of curriculum decision making**

## ***2.5. Impacts***

The development of curriculum can affect on students, teachers, administrators, and others ( industries and community)

### ***2.5.1. Impact on Students***

Students may understand the reasons for teaching subjects in the curriculum and they may be more motivated to learn the lessons. By knowing the curriculum, students can realize a sequence of courses that must be completed to earn a diploma and a degree.

### ***2.5.2. Impact on Teachers***

Teachers may understand what skills must be taught at each level when they really know the curriculum. Understanding and applying the effective curriculum helps teachers align the

learning objectives of their own curriculum with the school's curriculum. And they can follow the road map of their organization.

#### *2.5.3. Impact on Administrators*

Administrators can know the detailed curriculum of the schools to aid students obtain academic performance in national level. They can also realize that the school is teaching students relevant material and can monitor the progress of students.

#### *2.5.4. Impact on others*

The curriculum is aimed to teach students the importance of responsibility, hard work and responsible citizenship. The collaboration with teachers and parents and community (industries) will surely be effective on the development of a curriculum.

## Chapter Three

### The Innovative and Effective Curriculum for the Final Year Students of UCSY

The 21st Century demands the efficient, educated and experienced people especially in developing countries like Myanmar. In order to meet this requirement, since 2016-17 academic year, University of Computer Studies, Yangon has been developing the Internship Programme for the final year students who are going to seek their jobs and hunt for job opportunity. In other words, it can be said that the university is strengthening the capacity building for our country. In this situation, the new curriculum is essential to our university and students should be aware of the transition from schools to working environment.

According to the internship programme, the final year students do not necessarily attend two semester fully as usual. After completing the first semester (four-month-course), they will be sent to the work environment for three months during the second semester. Before they enter their real life working environment, they need to master their hard skills like how to maintain the computers, fix the network, write the correct software programme skillfully, etc. Apart from this, they also need to recognize the ethics of business field, which is also called the soft skills.

#### *3.1. A New Curriculum in English Language Teaching of UCSY*

In this context, the English Department, which usually supports every corner of UCSY, has changed the curriculum of the final year computer students. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century communications or soft skills – interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, writing CVs, cover letter, business letters, reports, answering interview questions, telephone interview, negotiating terms and conditions of service are taught to the final year students to develop the English language and communication skills, which are necessary for students in their work place. Moreover, the students are asked to write the project paper on their respective fields in group or individually.

The faculty members also give the opportunity for students to do workshops and invite people from business environment to share their knowledge to the students. Occasionally, incentive programmes like choosing the best student paper for writing programme, holding IT camps, programming contests locally or internationally as the extra curriculum activities are initiated from time to time.

The students' performances are evaluated by not from written examination only, but from other activities such as power point presentations in English, writing projects and group discussions.

#### *3.2. The outcomes of the new curriculum*

In English language teaching- learning situation of UCSY, students have come to realize that their motivation and performance are essential to learn in their studies as well as to pass the

examination. English is important in their learning and also enhance to their internship programme.

**For Students**, by means of learning communication skills and soft skills, students could produce the business style in writing and they have understood the employability skills and their performance will surely be effective in their work place.

**For teachers**, they find new methods and have to prepare for teaching communication skills and soft skills. This will motivate teachers and make the innovative teaching style.

**For employers or industries**, who are looking for the qualified interns in graduates, may be satisfied with the intern students of UCSY. They may suggest to the administrators of university what they want and what they expect in their employment programme.

The following is the course description of the final year students:

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Department Number	ENG 501	Course Title	Communication skills & Soft skills
Semester Hours	3	Course Coordinator	Department of English

### **Current Catalog description**

ENG 501 : Communication skills & Soft skills

Two hours lecture and one hour tutorial

Students need to learn communication skills and soft skills in their final year so that they can develop and perform well in their work place. Moreover, they can have the attributes required by industrial needs.

### **Course Outcomes**

Students who complete the course will be able to:

1. improve presentation skills in English.
2. develop in soft skills such as inter personal and intrapersonal skills
3. achieve employability skill that the industries expect

## Major Topics Covered in the Course

1. Writing CV form and cover letter
2. Writing Business Letters
3. Interviewing , Negotiating
4. 21<sup>st</sup> Century communicating skills: emailing, writing memo
5. Presentation Skill

## Assessment Plan for the Course

Tutorials( writing CV forms, business letters) are made once a week or twice a month in order to know how much they achieve in their business style of writing. Project papers are submitted individually and presentations are made according to their papers. Students' performance in every section are recorded, group discussions are occasionally done.

Since this intern programme has been the first-ever programme of the UCSY, the result will not be said assuredly but it can be assumed that the students are able to realize that knowing the theory is not enough, knowing how to solve the problem is good. It is expected that the programme will promote the coordination of experiential learning programme and the integration of experiential into the total curriculum – when the students come back from their internship programme , they have realized their needs and the faculty members also explore the new material and refine some of the current curriculum which is applicable to the real life situation.

### ***3.3 . Some limitations of the internship programme***

It cannot be said that intern program is a totally perfect and good way to the universities and institutions.

It has some limitations for the students, the companies, and the academics.  
([www.praxisnetwork.eu](http://www.praxisnetwork.eu)>internship-adva.....)

For the students,

## **Chapter Four Conclusion**

It cannot be denied that curriculum development affects the performance of students. In conclusion, implementation of the curriculum must correlate the development of the industry and prepare students to culminate the learned knowledge and skills in English language practice.

To facilitate the students' intern programme, communication skills in 21<sup>st</sup> century and soft skills have been taught before they go to the companies. By doing so, students' performance will be developed and effective communication will also be achieved.

Since the modification of the curriculum in final year, students may complete an intensive period of the respective fields that effectively inducts them into the nature, structure and organization of schools and the work, rules and responsibilities of employees and employers. They come to know the values and cultures of the working environment. They may also have the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate the difference between theoretical and hands-on experience.

In brief, to gain an effective curriculum and quality education, curriculum development is the critical part in institutions, and the collaboration with the administrators and industries or companies are also required.

## References

1. G, Mary Alvior (G, Dec, 2014)
2. Htay, Dr.Mg Mg ( March, 2018) lectures
3. Tyler Ralph, (1940), *models of curriculum decision making*
4. Wheeler1970, *What is curriculum?*
5. [https:// simplyeducate.me](https://simplyeducate.me)
6. [https:// www.slideshare.net](https://www.slideshare.net)