



FROM PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE OF COLLABORATIVE CURRICULUM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT: AN EXPERIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

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Programme Development Research of the IB

Programme development research of the IB is to inform curriculum development initiatives and to support internal research capacity for curriculum review including the following four interconnected areas:

- Fostering curriculum implementation by exploring and analyzing initiatives, strategies, challenges and lessons learned through enhancing the implementation of the IB's three programmes in diverse school contexts and developing timely resources for the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Supporting the continuum of the IB's three programmes by investigating theory and practice of curriculum alignment and articulation to support learning continuum between and across the three programmes.
- Responding proactively to potentials of and challenges for students in the 21st century by examining initiatives in cultivating international-mindedness and how it relates to students' development towards holistic individuals, lifelong learners, and global citizens.
- Building research capacity for curriculum development by providing research training to sustain research competences and thus rigorous educational research throughout the continuous curriculum development process of the three programmes.

Curriculum Research and Development in the IB

Most educational decisions and activities are 'interpretations in action' which make a difference to learning and teaching. Curriculum research and development appear to be a type of systematic investigation with different goals involving interrelated stages of creating dependable evidence from various perspectives. Such research efforts intend to justify 'interpretations' made to support curriculum changes and enhance pedagogical practices, to share the success of those 'interpretations' in progression, or if not, to seek feasible ways for improvement.

Research for curriculum development is complex and its theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches are determined by how curriculum developers interpret curriculum and research. Thus, a shared understanding of theories and practices concerning curriculum studies needs to be established and communicated within the IB community to explicate the basis of curriculum decisions and evaluate the quality of research work.

Accordingly, this paper attempts to set down a specific framework for curriculum research and development in international education including its components along with a number of examples in its application in developing guidance on school language mapping.

Research Approaches to Curriculum Development in the IB: Principles and Practice

Methodological Approach & Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to be ethnographic, phenomenological, interpretative, heuristic and collaborative • Case studies, design experiments
Instruments for Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions asked tend to be open ended • Semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and ongoing informal conversation • Participatory observation • Documentation including literature sources, emails, samples of language maps, ongoing reflective notes, etc. • Brainstorming activities between stakeholders to capture and explicate reflection-in/ on-action • More flexible, iterative style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions
Analytical Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground theory methods; content analysis • To describe essential features and individual experiences and to explain relationships and variations of a particular experience for a particular group of students including the influences of the setting and how systems function
Data Types & Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse • Textual e.g. documents or files • Visual and audio e.g. audiotapes, videotapes or photos
Trustworthiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer debriefing; triangulation; ongoing reflection • Complex textual descriptions of experiences, connections between theoretical perspectives, strategies promoting educational initiatives and learning outcomes • Indication of applicability in real educational settings (i.e. relationships between the theoretical analysis and the analysis of the collected data; summary of issues and advantages) • Mechanisms for the dissemination and maintenance of curriculum efforts and changes

Development of Guidelines for Language Mapping

The IB offers three high quality and challenging educational programmes for a worldwide community of schools, aiming to create a better, more peaceful world through the development of intercultural understanding and international mindedness. This infers that the ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes intercultural perspectives in multilingual classrooms. The IB recognizes this valuable potential and the need for guidance for schools to understand a variety of languages in their schools and how that impacts on teaching and learning. Hence, a range of IB official documents supporting better understanding of the role of language in learning in the international education context have been provided. To enable IB schools and teachers to put conceptual understanding into practice, one of the next language and learning initiatives is the development of guidance for schools on language mapping.

Curriculum Research and Development in the IB: Stages, Objectives and Outcomes

Interconnected Stages	Questions Asked	Objectives	Implications for policy and practice
Research & Review Establishing educational goals, review procedures and content analyses to draw implications for the initial curriculum development effort concerning specific subject matter content and pedagogy by involving multiple perspectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What are important theoretical perspectives on the subject of language mapping and profiles? 2) What are empirical studies on school-based models and initiatives as well as implementation strategies? How credible are they, what are the goals and why are they effective? 3) What are existing practices of schools within the IB community? To what extent are those practices effective or less effective in context? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To determine educational goals of IB school language maps 2) To develop a theoretical framework for the review on theories and approaches regarding language mapping and profiles as well as international and national language standards/frameworks/ guidelines 3) To collect sources for evidence and identify commonalities between school language maps/profiles and how a good student language profile would look like 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Certain issues were emerged while reviewing on literature sources including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose language profiles should be included (e.g. individuals or community)? • What is the role of assessment? • Who are the audiences of language maps? • What should be provided in supporting schools (e.g. a glossary, a reading list, templates, and samples)? • What are the best media? 2) The term 'mapping/ maps' was preferred to the original suggestion of 'profiling/ profile'. It was concerned that the latter might have negative associations with other kinds of deficit profiling.
Update & Selection Building up theoretical aspects for use in developing guidelines for language mapping which shed light on effective models, initiatives and strategies for implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What do specific components and features of language maps account for their impact and why? 2) What would be strategies for successful implementation and issues resulted from system and practice changes? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To determine components of school language maps 2) To structure guidelines for developing a school language maps 3) To explicate research-based foundations of language mapping based on the review and content analyses 	<p>Three different perspectives of ownership for language mapping were identified including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner centred (emphasizing goal setting, reflection, intercultural awareness, identity and responsibility); • Teacher centred (for formative assessment, long and short term planning and advocacy); • School centred (for policy making, admissions and placement).
Pilot & Evaluation Collecting empirical evidence to evaluate the appeal, usability and effectiveness of the curriculum development effort	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To what extent are the developed guidelines usable by and effective with the diverse settings of pilot schools? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are changes of system and practice as implementing? • Under what conditions is the implementation effective or less effective? • What effects does it have on schools, teachers and students? 2) What is the appropriate use of empirical evidence in drawing implications for effective implementation and areas for improvement? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To understand and explain schools leaders' and teachers' perspectives on specific components and characteristics of the developed guidelines 2) To capture and describe their experiences of implementation and identify their issues of concern through the analysis of on-going discussion and school documents 3) To indicate links and refinement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Six schools were invited to trial the developed guidelines for language mapping and the results will be analysed. 2) A diagrammatic representation was further generated, connecting both the language mapping effort to the IB learner profile and programmes. 3) Empirical findings of the evaluation of the pilots were incorporated in structuring a school self evaluation form of school language policy development and implementation. 4) An unexpected positive outcome was an increased sense of integration of a language continuum across the IB programmes.
Implementation & Communication Enacting and sustaining the curriculum development effort by communicating changes and its relevance and providing various supports	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What are the support requirements and materials for various contexts? 2) What are appropriate channels to communicate the guidelines of language mapping and possible changes of such implementation at different levels? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To obtain and document school language maps including a range of student profiles and share selected samples with the IB community via Online Curriculum Centre 2) To communicate critical contextual and implementation variables influencing effective implementation through various media 3) To indicate future directions for research and development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Theoretical and practical aspects of language mapping are included in support materials and addressed in a series of online, in-person and on-site professional development workshops in language and learning. 2) Presentations at internal and external conferences to seek different viewpoints. 3) Students' perspectives on profiling their language(s) and how that impacts on their learning were identified to be relevant information to obtain. Documentary analysis of school language maps will be conducted.