

Curriculum Overload: A way forward

8 November 2021
17:00 – 19:00
Geneva Time (UTC +1)



UNESCO-IBE – OECD International Webinar No2

This event is co-hosted by UNESCO International Bureau of Education (UNESCO-IBE) and the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Context and justification

The OECD has initiated a series of six curriculum studies on different dimensions with regard to teaching, learning and assessment – essentially on the *why* and *what* to education- with the aim of positioning among other fundamental issues, student well-being and holistic development at the centre of curriculum design and redesign processes (Schleicher, 2020). One of these reports is entitled [Curriculum Overload: A Way Forward](#). This document reminds us how the education content is organized and the way they are taught strongly impact learning opportunities, participation, processes and outcomes.

The report shares an international comparative evidence-based perspective on the relevance of rethinking the curriculum to support a better, inclusive, fair and sustainable future for the youngest generation. Repositioning the curriculum in the global educational context entails visualizing the learner as a person. Hence, curriculum must have a certain flexibility, be succinct,

clear and profound so that schools and teachers customize it to the needs and expectations of all learners as mattering equally.

The report shares some key categories that allow a deeper analysis of curriculum:

- (i) Curriculum expansion, which consists of adding new content to the curriculum that reflects national and international demands, without review the existing curriculum;
- (ii) Curriculum unbalanced occurs when some subjects/disciplines are prioritised to the detriment of others, leading to a hierarchization of knowledge and competencies; and
- (iii) Curriculum overload reflects a constellation of factors related to the number of topics, time allotted, periodicity of assessment, the size of curriculum documents and/or the lack of preparation to develop adequate content and transformation processes.

These categories show how curriculum engineering matters when it comes to content and delivery of learning. Analysing these aspects can provide us with the necessary clues to understand the gaps between prescribed and experienced curricula.

Together with OECD, the UNESCO-IBE understands that the holistic well-being of learners and teachers should be the entry point of curriculum design and development processes. This well-being implies the integral development of knowledge and competencies that will be valuable for the learners' future, and for them to be actors of their lives, autonomous in their thoughts and actions. Besides, this notion of well-being will empower teachers, and stimulate their practices. Considering teachers as curriculum co-developers is crucial to reach this goal.

In light of strengthening sustainable learning for a sustainable, curriculum transformation is key to better address learners' needs in the post-pandemic era. A vision of education where curriculum lay the foundations of an ample social consensus of *what, how, when, and why* students should learn. In forging this consensus every level of the education system as well as stakeholders from outside the education system play a crucial role to give effect to a genuine profound transformation of the existing teaching, learning and assessment processes.

Objectives of the webinar

The objective of the webinar is to contribute to an engaging, constructive and interregional discussion on the findings of the OECD report "*Curriculum Overload: A Way Forward*". The discussion will give a voice to the different making-decision levels of education and of education system. It will include the reflections of the Ministers of Education from African and Latin America and the Caribbean as well as from OECD Education Director, Mr. Andreas Schleicher and the UNESCO-IBE Director, Mr. Yao Ydo. Likewise, the panel of learners and teachers will exchange on their experiences and thoughts as going hand in hand.

Webinar programme

The webinar will provide a platform for panellists to share their reflections and experience across regions. It will be structured around three questions:

- What are the main findings of the OECD report “Curriculum Overload: A Way Forward”?
- Which are the main implications of these findings for addressing overloaded curriculum?
- What are the views, experiences, challenges and opportunities faced by Ministers, teachers and learners to address curriculum overload?

Target audiences

The target audiences for this webinar are teachers, teacher trainers, policymakers, curriculum developers and specialists, pedagogical advisers, principals and supervisors well as other key stakeholders. This includes senior officials and managers of Ministries of Education directly responsible for implementing and managing education programmes, as well as non-governmental organizations, bilateral partners, foundations and others supporting this work.

Format and language

The webinar will be held virtually on Zoom. Simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Spanish will be available.

Registration

Those interested in participating in the webinar can register [here](#).

Provisional Agenda

Monday 8 November 2021 17:00 – 19:00 Geneva Time (UTC +1)	
17:00 – 17:05	Welcome and introduction (Ms. Miho Taguma)
17:05 – 17:35	Presentation of the main message of the report (Mr. Andreas Schleicher) Comments on the report’s implications focusing on curriculum engineering and delivery of learning (Mr. Yao Ydo)
17:35 – 17:55	Ministerial discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">- H.E. Ms. Mariatou Kone, Minister of National Education and Literacy, Côte d’Ivoire- H.E. Ms. Melania Brenes Monge, Vice-Minister of Education, Costa Rica Short intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none">- H.E. Mr. Louis Zabaneh, Minister of State, Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, Belize
17:55 – 18:55	Moderated interregional discussion with teachers and learners from various countries Moderators: Perrine Arsendeau, Yi Yang, Carlos Bueno Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Omam Ndougou, Teacher, Cameroon- Bwiiko Vincent Parker, Student, Uganda Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pymrutchny Yingdon, Teacher, Thailand- Christopher Ho Chun Wai, Student, Malaysia Latin American and Caribbean <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Elisa Guerra, Teacher, Mexico- Mario Maximiliano Sánchez, Student, Argentina
18:55 – 19:00	Closing remarks (Mr. Renato Operti) Reminder of the main points previously mentioned in the webinar Vote of thanks