

Studies of Society and Environment (2000)

Years 1 to 10 Sourcebook Guidelines (Part 8 of 9)

Note: The PDF version of this document has been split into sections for easier download. This file is Part 8 of 9.

Curriculum evaluation

Curriculum evaluation in the context of the Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment curriculum material is concerned with the evaluation of school programs, units and activities.

The purpose of evaluation is to provide a basis for decision making about the need for and direction of change. It may provide reassurance that current programs and practices are continuing to meet specific needs. On the other hand, evaluation may show discrepancies between students' needs and the current programs and practices, requiring changes to be made in one or more areas.

Evaluation is an ongoing process. It may also take place at the conclusion of a program, unit or period of time. Ongoing evaluation allows continuous refinement of a program; end-point evaluation enables a holistic picture of a program or unit to be formed. The timing of evaluation depends on its purpose.

Evaluation may be conducted by teachers, administrators, students, parents or other stakeholders working alone or in collaboration with one or more colleagues.

Evaluation is the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information. This enables judgments to be made regarding the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of the syllabus through school programs, units and activities.

Appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency

Appropriateness refers to the extent to which programs, units and activities:

- match the development and learning needs of students
- are inclusive of, and relevant to, all students
- match the syllabus requirements.

Effectiveness refers to the extent to which programs, units and activities:

- are sequenced and comprehensive in their focus on the requirements of the syllabus
- reflect the characteristics of worthwhile activities
- promote active student involvement and self-reflection
- are consistent with the principles of assessment
- enable students to demonstrate learning outcomes.

Efficiency refers to the extent to which programs, units and activities make timely and cost-effective use of resources.

Evaluation foci

In evaluating school programs, units and activities, there are four foci:

- evaluation of student outcomes
- evaluation of the materials that document school programs, units and activities
- evaluation of the support provided within the school for implementation of programs, units and activities
- evaluation of the use of school programs, units and activities.

Evaluation of student outcomes

This focus is about evaluating the appropriateness of student outcomes.

Appropriateness

The appropriateness of student outcomes is evaluated by gathering data and making judgments about the extent to which the measured outcomes match the expected outcomes for particular groups of students.

Consider:

- what outcomes students are demonstrating
- whether students' demonstrations of learning outcomes are appropriate, given the starting point of students' understandings
- whether the expectations of the levels of students' demonstrations are appropriate, given the starting point of students' understandings.

Evaluation of school curriculum materials

This focus is about evaluating the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the materials that document school programs, units and activities.

Appropriateness

The appropriateness of the materials used to document school programs, units and activities is evaluated by gathering data and making judgments about the extent to which this documentation matches the learning needs of students and syllabus and policy requirements.

Consider the extent to which school program, unit and activity documentation:

- reflects an outcomes approach
- identifies and caters for the characteristics and needs of students, including those in target groups
- acknowledges and incorporates students' life experiences and interests
- is appropriate to the diverse learning styles of students and includes opportunities to use physical activity as a medium for learning
- describes planning for both learning and assessment
- reflects the equity considerations
- is consistent with the characteristics of worthwhile activities described in the sourcebook guidelines
- focuses on core learning outcomes and incorporates core content
- is consistent with relevant school authority policies.

In considering the appropriateness of the documentation of school programs, units and activities, the topic of assessment should not be overlooked.

Consider the extent to which school assessment documentation:

- is consistent with the principles of assessment described in the syllabus
- incorporates techniques for gathering information that suits the learning outcomes and context
- overcomes barriers to equitable demonstration of outcomes
- uses a variety of forms to suit the diverse learning styles of students, including providing opportunities to use physical activity as a medium for the demonstration of learning outcomes
- caters for the possible range of student development levels.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of school program, unit and activity documentation is evaluated by gathering data and making judgments about the extent to which it has the potential to impact on student learning as measured through students' demonstrations of learning outcomes.

Consider the extent to which school program, unit and activity documentation has the potential to:

- add value to student learning, given the starting point of students' understandings
- lead to the demonstration of learning outcomes
- incorporate assessment as a learning opportunity and use the information gathered to inform future planning
- display continuity in the planned development of conceptual understandings and cater for a range of developmental levels
- provide opportunities for learning in the cross-curricular priorities.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of documentation should include aspects connected with assessment. Consider the extent to which school assessment documentation:

- treats assessment as an integral part of the learning process
- incorporates a process for making consistent judgments
- allows multiple opportunities in a range of contexts for demonstrating learning outcomes, including cross-key learning area, cross-curricular priorities and extracurricular contexts
- establishes clear expectations for student performance.

Efficiency

The efficiency of school program, unit and activity documentation is evaluated by gathering data and making judgments about the amount of resources required or effort needed to produce and implement the documentation.

Consider the extent to which the school program, unit and activity documentation:

- requires physical, human and material resources in its preparation
- requires resources to implement.

Evaluation of school support for curriculum

This focus is about evaluating the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of school support, both physical and human, for curriculum planning and implementation.

Appropriateness

The appropriateness of school support is evaluated by gathering data and making judgments about the extent to which physical and human support match the curriculum needs of teachers, paraprofessionals, parents and students.

Consider the extent to which current physical resources:

- facilitate the learning outcomes of the syllabus
- allow the provision of learning spaces and storage areas for both current and future needs
- match student and program needs
- promote and allow the implementation of safe practices.

Consider the extent to which current human resources:

- enable learning opportunities to be offered that match the needs of target audiences.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of school support is evaluated by gathering data and making judgments about the impact that physical and human support have on students' learning and demonstration of learning outcomes and on the curriculum knowledge and expertise of teachers, paraprofessionals and parents.

Consider the extent to which physical resources:

- allow equitable access to learning spaces
- are of suitable quality and quantity to support students in their learning
- are planned to identify future learning needs.

Consider the extent to which human resources:

- enable the maintenance and enhancement of the professional knowledge of teachers
- identify gaps in expertise and address them
- use the elaborations of learning outcomes as a basis for developing a shared understanding of the core learning outcomes
- develop skills to assist consistency of teacher judgment
- encourage and assist teachers to use sourcebook modules as a model for planning for learning in and assessment of units which focus on learning outcomes, core content and the cross-curricular priorities
- encourage and assist teachers to access information in the sourcebook to inform their planning for learning and assessment so that it is inclusive and relevant to student needs
- identify and utilise curriculum expertise both within and outside the school
- utilise a range of strategies that enable all members of the school community to develop a shared understanding of the learning outcomes of the school curriculum
- engage in support activities that promote the outcomes approach to education described in the syllabus.

Efficiency

The efficiency of school support is evaluated by gathering data and making judgments about the amount of physical and human resources required or the effort needed to support curriculum planning and implementation.

Consider the extent to which physical resources:

- are purchased and distributed to maximise student learning
- are managed to maximise use
- provide value for money.

Consider the extent to which human resources:

- are organised in a timely and efficient manner to maximise understandings of syllabuses and related curriculum materials.

Evaluation of the use or implementation of school programs and units

This focus is about evaluating the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the use or implementation of school programs and units.

Appropriateness

The appropriateness of the use or implementation of school programs and units is evaluated by gathering data and making judgments about the extent to which implementation strategies and pedagogy match the learning needs of students and syllabus and policy requirements.

Consider the extent to which the use or implementation of school programs and units:

- matches the intentions of school programs or units and the documented activities
- matches the needs of particular students
- is modified or adapted according to ongoing feedback from students.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the use or implementation of school programs and units is evaluated by gathering data and making judgments about the extent to which implementation strategies and pedagogy impact on students and student learning.

Consider the extent to which the implementation of school programs and units:

- follows the school program and units as documented
- includes resources that enhance students' opportunities to learn
- actively engages students in the learning process and provides opportunities for them to negotiate the sequence and pace of their own learning
- challenges students
- involves students in becoming aware of what they are learning and includes opportunities for reflection and self-assessment
- provides students with time to produce work of a high standard
- provides opportunities and sufficient time for students to demonstrate learning outcomes in a range of contexts
- incorporates assessment that enables consistent judgments to be made about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes
- leads to the planning of future learning opportunities for students who have not yet demonstrated the core learning outcomes.

Efficiency

The efficiency of the use or implementation of school programs and units is evaluated by gathering data and making judgments about the amount of resources required or effort needed for implementation.

Consider the extent to which the use or implementation of school programs and units:

- requires physical, human and material resources.