



CHAPTER FOUR

Checklists: Constructing a curriculum

Y – When developing a meaningful curriculum, give time to:

- Ensure the curriculum is built around the knowledge, skills and concepts that matter most within your subject.
- Consider what you want students to know, remember and be able to do by the end of their journey.
- Focus on long-term learning rather than short-term performance.
- Make curriculum decisions based on the needs of your students and context.
- Consider whether your curriculum reflects the purpose and values of your subject.
- Remember that a meaningful curriculum should provide both challenge and accessibility for all students.

Y – When reviewing what curriculum is already in place, follow the process of:

- Audit the curriculum before making significant changes.
- Gather evidence from multiple sources, not personal preference.
- Review curriculum maps, assessments and lesson sequences.
- Analyse exam evidence, student work and teacher reflections.
- Identify where pupils are succeeding and where they struggle.
- Check alignment between curriculum content and assessment demands.
- Consider knowledge progression across year groups.
- Use structured questions to diagnose curriculum strengths and weaknesses.
- Share curriculum findings openly with the department.
- Adapt the curriculum carefully rather than making wholesale changes.
- Make curriculum decisions collaboratively with the team.
- Guide discussion while ensuring all voices contribute.

T – When making curriculum decisions as a department:

- Clarify the curriculum problem before discussing solutions.
- Present specific examples and evidence to frame discussion.
- Define the constraints that must be worked within.
- Prepare possible solutions before the meeting.
- Structure discussion carefully to keep it focused and productive.
- Encourage all team members to contribute ideas.
- Record views and questions without immediate judgement.
- Avoid confirming decisions before everyone has contributed.
- Guide discussion without allowing one voice to dominate.
- Create time for reflection before major curriculum changes.
- Confirm the direction of travel before final decisions are made.
- Return with a clear decision and rationale.



Five Steps Ahead

T – When implementing curriculum change, try to:

- Schedule dedicated curriculum discussions rather than relying on brief updates in meetings.
- Share relevant evidence with staff before discussions take place.
- Ask colleagues what is working well and where they believe improvements are needed.
- Encourage staff to identify issues with content, sequencing, assessment or curriculum delivery.
- Gather suggestions before proposing solutions yourself.
- Record key discussion points and agreed actions.
- Consider the impact of proposed changes on curriculum time, workload and student learning.
- Clearly communicate final decisions and the rationale behind them.
- Review the impact of changes before making further adjustments.

T – When deciding how much curriculum control to exercise:

- Identify which elements of the curriculum must remain consistent across the department.
- Decide where staff need complete clarity and where professional flexibility is appropriate.
- Consider curriculum content, lesson resources, assessment and teaching approaches separately.
- Be explicit with staff about which aspects are non-negotiable and which allow for adaptation.
- Ensure any centralised resources support teaching without preventing professional judgement.
- Review whether the current balance is helping staff deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Adapt the level of control based on the experience, confidence and needs of the team.
- Remember that consistency and autonomy should work together, not compete with one another.

T – When reviewing curriculum impact:

- Schedule dedicated curriculum discussions rather than relying on brief updates in meetings.
- Share relevant evidence with staff before discussions take place.
- Ask colleagues what is working well and where they believe improvements are needed.
- Encourage staff to identify issues with content, sequencing, assessment or curriculum delivery.
- Gather suggestions before proposing solutions yourself.
- Record key discussion points and agreed actions.
- Consider the impact of proposed changes on curriculum time, workload and student learning.
- Clearly communicate final decisions and the rationale behind them.
- Review the impact of changes before making further adjustments.



Five Steps Ahead

T – To ensure the curriculum extends beyond individual classrooms:

- Ensure the curriculum and classroom experience are secure before introducing additional enrichment opportunities.
- Audit the enrichment activities already taking place within the department, including clubs, revision sessions, visitors and trips.
- Map existing opportunities on to a calendar to identify gaps across year groups and different points in the academic year.
- Consider appointing a member of the team to lead or coordinate enrichment provision.
- Aim to provide opportunities that are accessible to all students, not just a select group.
- Explore a range of options including trips, lunchtime clubs, visiting speakers, documentaries, lectures and university outreach programmes.
- Look for low-cost opportunities that can be delivered without creating excessive workload for staff.
- Review participation regularly and adapt the offer to reflect student interests and needs.

Y – When influencing timetable decisions:

- Identify your department's non-negotiables before timetable planning begins.
- Map out staffing, curriculum and rooming requirements across the department.
- Review the previous year's timetable and identify any issues that need addressing.
- Consider how staffing changes may affect class allocation, rooming and curriculum delivery.
- Prioritise protecting curriculum time and maintaining the integrity of the curriculum sequence.
- Meet with the relevant member of the leadership team early to discuss department needs.
- Present clear reasons for requests and explain the impact they will have on students and staff.
- Continue advocating for the needs of the department throughout the timetable process.
- Review draft timetables carefully and raise concerns before decisions become difficult to change.
- Remember that successful timetable decisions are often secured through careful planning and persistent communication behind the scenes.