

**DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM  
EVALUATION IN OMAN**

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**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA**

**KUALA LUMPUR**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
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Participants of the study from different organisations were an important part of this success  
Thanks to them.

# **DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM EVALUATION IN OMAN**

## **ABSTRACT**

The research studies the ELT context and the Curriculum Evaluation area in Oman. This study identifies the need for developing a framework for the Curriculum Evaluation, and then develops and tests it in the Omani context in order to develop a modified version of the framework.

The study utilizes a developmental research as a framework for Curriculum Evaluation and it has three phases. It starts with the need for developing the framework for Curriculum Evaluation by involving 7 samples of curriculum officers. The second phase comprises of using the Delphi methods with three rounds involving 12 samples of curriculum evaluation experts to develop the framework. The final phase of the study includes 34 samples of - English supervisors and Ministry officers to constitute a framework evaluation.

The research highlighted the need for English Language Curriculum Evaluation Framework. These findings were supported by all participants. It also stipulated a list of elements. This doctoral research also found that these particular elements are useful for the Omani context, however continuous development should be underscored. This can complement the selected elements and form a good basis for any other framework within Oman.

# **PEMBANGUNAN RANGKAKERJA UNTUK PENILAIAN KURIKULUM**

## **BAHASA INGGERIS DI OMAN**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini mengkaji konteks ELT dan bidang penilaian kurikulum di Oman. Kajian ini mengenalpasti keperluan untuk membangunkan satu rangka kerja bagi Penilaian Kurikulum dan, seterusnya membangun rangka kerja untuk Penilaian Kurikulum dan mengujinya dalam konteks Oman bagi membina satu versi kajian yang sudah diubahsuai.

Kajian ini menggunakan kajian pembangunan sebagai kerangka Piawaian Kualiti untuk Penilaian Kurikulum dan ia mempunyai tiga fasa. Ia bermula dengan membangunkan rangka kerja bagi Penilaian Kurikulum melibatkan tujuh sampel pegawai kurikulum. Fasa kedua merangkumi penggunaan kaedah Delphi dengan tiga pusingan yang melibatkan 12 sampel pakar penilaian bagi membina kerangka tersebut. Fasa terakhir kajian meliputi tiga puluh empat sampel penyelia Bahasa Inggeris dan pegawai kementerian untuk membentuk satu kerangka kerja penilaian.

Kajian ini menyerlahkan keperluan untuk kerangka Penilaian Kurikulum Bahasa Inggeris. Dapatan ini disokong oleh semua peserta. Ia juga menyenaraikan unsur-unsur yang perlu diliputi dalam rangka kerja tersebut. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa unsur-unsur tersebut adalah diperlukan dalam konteks Oman. Namun pembangunan yang berterusan harus juga ditekankan. Ia boleh membantu menambak-baik unsur-unsur yang dipilih dan membentuk asas yang baik untuk kerangka yang lain di Oman. Ia boleh membantu menambak-baik unsur-unsur yang telah dipilih dan membentuk asas yang baik untuk kerangka yang lain di Oman.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

Education is developing rapidly over time. There are regular reforms going on in different places which can include developing teaching styles and methods, curriculum design and better understanding the learning process. Educationalists intend to develop different aspects of education including curriculum development.

Continuous development of the curriculum is taking place all over the world. In some places, Ministries of Education have their own curriculum officers and basically develop their own curricula. However, there are other countries that depend on different publishers who write, revise and develop the curriculum over a period of time. In both these cases, a need to evaluate the curriculum is significant in order to update the methodology utilized, the content and other curriculum features.

The field of Curriculum Evaluation is still developing and when looking closely at Curriculum Evaluation research publications, it is clear that the aspects covered in this area are still insufficient if compared to other issues in Education. This important aspect of Curriculum Evaluation is vital and needs a lot of work, especially in developing a systematic approach for Curriculum Evaluation in the long-term. Therefore, by developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation for the Omani context- which this study intends to do- would add to the field and help to understand the English language curriculum context in Oman.



Moving to education in Oman, the educational system in Oman has developed continuously. In 1998, a new system was created based on the new education philosophy which takes into account the different stakeholders' needs and expectations as well as to cope with the changing world in the sense of the information and skills needed and the technology utilized. The stakeholder covers all parties involved in the need for English language teaching and involved in the developing and evaluating process, such as employers and higher institutions and colleges.

## **1.1 Contextual Framework**

This research will only focus on English Language Curriculum Evaluation and not on that of other subjects. This study has been conducted throughout 2012 and 2013, at a time when there is no existing framework for public for the English Language Curriculum Evaluation in Oman for which the study intends to formulate one. However, before discussing the thesis structure and argumentation this chapter will begin by highlighting how English is used and taught and with curriculum development and evaluation aspects in Oman.

### **1.1.1 English in Oman**

English in Oman is seen as an important foreign language. It is utilized in both governmental and private organizations. However, it is used more in private associations, as they are linked more closely to international organizations, such as UNESCO, UNICEF and others areas such as oil and gas companies. From this international perspective, people in Omani society see the need to focus more on how English is taught in classrooms. They also see the importance of teaching English as a means for communication and of developing children's abilities to use it authentically - for example, filling in English forms and writing e-mails. Parents see the importance of this target language for their children as

it operates as a tool or as a gateway to the future. They spend their time, effort and money to help their children to learn English quickly and effectively. They sometimes send their children to private institutes during holidays for English and computing courses.

From this standpoint, English is expected to be taught to reach the expectations of society and parents. These expectations lead to focus on the use of the target language. They mainly focus, as the researcher sees it, on language production skills, as parents are keen to see their children write and talk well.

The use of English in Oman has developed into "institutionalized domains", such as business, the media and education (Al-Busaidi, 1995). To prepare future participants to function in these domains, English is taught in government schools from Grade One, while it is taught from Kindergarten One in private schools. English has also become the medium of teaching and training in all private and public higher education/post secondary institutions throughout the Sultanate (Al-Issa, 2005).

It is clear that English is seen as an effective tool for any educational innovation. As such, efforts to improve English Language instruction receive political and economic support from the government, which determines its place on the social "hierarchy" (Al-Issa, 2002). English is considered as a resource for "national development" (Wiley, 1996). "English is also considered as a fundamental tool that facilitates 'Omanisation'" - a gradual and systematic process through which the expatriate labour force is replaced by a qualified Omani one (Al-Issa, 2002). Mastery of the English language is a prerequisite for finding a white-collar job (Al-Busaidi, 1995; Al-Issa, 2002). English is, hence, central to Oman's "continued development" (Nunan, Tyacke, & Walton, 1987, p. 2) and is "a resource for national development as the means for wider communication within the international

community" (2). This stresses the need for English language and also a need to specify the objectives of learning it in Oman and other related elements and of course the need to make these elements easy to be known by different organisations in a form of a framework which this study intends to develop.

The government recognises that competence in English is important if Oman is to become an active participant in the new global economy. English is the most common language for international business and commerce, and is the exclusive language in important sectors such as banking and aviation (Al-Issa, 2005). English is the global language for Science and Technology, and rapidly expanding international computerised databases and telecommunications networks that are maintained in English are increasingly becoming an important aspect of academic and business life (Ministry of Education, 1995).

In 2004, the Ministry of Tourism was created in Oman. This was as a result of a better understanding of the need to stay on the cutting edge of international development, and also because of the increase in the number of tourists coming to Oman every year. It is also linked with the perceived need to diversify in the economy. Therefore, if we focus only on the Omani culture by highlighting its main aspects, this would not satisfy the needs created by these recent developments in Omani society. The effects of tourism, business and of accepting others would definitely seem to require a better understanding of others and an open mind in learning about their cultures. These would have far-reaching effects within Oman. Thus, teachers need to be working with their students with some space for them to teach the language in the ways which might help their students to use the language in public. The increased use of English in Oman necessitates innovation in the education system hence, the importance and significance behind my particular research topic.

The use of different communication and information devices are noticed easily within the Omani context and Omani youths too. It is uncommon now to meet even a teenager without a smart phone with modern features. They use the phone applications such as Whatsapp which are mostly in English, chatting and searching the internet for information for school purposes and their own interest. The availability for these devices and their use adds to the use of English.

### **1.1.2 English Language Teaching in Oman**

English is taught as a second language subject in government schools in Oman. Students start studying it from Grade 1 along with Arabic which is naturally their mother tongue. They have 5-7 periods per week and each period lasts for 40 minutes, which makes about 3-4 hours of learning English per week.

Schools are provided with some materials from the Omani Ministry of Education. Each school has a Learning Resource Centre which contains computers, videos, cassette players and many books. However, these centres are rarely used by the English teachers as there are very few English books and resources available in each centre.

There are 3 levels of schools running at the same time. The 'Basic Cycle 1 Education, which covers grades 1-4, the Basic Schools, Cycle 2 for grades 5-10 and third level is called 'Post-Basic' schools which includes grades 11 and 12. In addition, in some remote areas of the country, a school might cover two levels or even the three of them. In a place where the researcher comes from, there are only two schools, one for boys covering grades 1-12 and the other one is for girls covering all the three levels; includes grades 1-12.

English teachers in Oman are comprised of both Omanis and non-Omanis. Non-Omani teachers represent many different nationalities, such as Egyptian, Palestinian, Jordanian, Indian, and Sudanese. Teaching experience in Oman varies; while some teachers have several years of experience, some are fresh graduate teachers with little practical classroom experience. In addition, some non-Omani teachers have been in the country for a few years while some are new to the country and to Oman's education system. Moreover, most non-Omani teachers stay in Oman for only four years. Thus, there are usually some new teachers arriving in Oman every year. Initially, a need for an orientation course is important in a country like Oman in order to help new teachers, both Omanis and non-Omanis, as a refreshing course to highlight the main issues of the textbooks and better ways to work with Omani students.

Students in Oman are rarely formally exposed to English or to native English speakers. Very few Omani children have the opportunity to listen to English being spoken by their parents at home. However, they are exposed to English through the satellite channels and the Internet, which many can access from their homes. This creates difficulties for teachers seeking to implement the syllabus, as they need to provide more interactive opportunities to use the language in their classrooms, and to do so in a very interesting and enjoyable way. It must also influence the kind of English that is being taught because there is often a disconnect between the English of text books and that of the media, as the language utilized and taught within a classroom is usually simpler and selective when compared to that which learners might hear from the media. Starting from 1998, learners in the government schools and the private ones started to learn English from grade 1 which might have helped learners to be more exposed to English and get more chances to use it, although no research could be observed on this issue so far.

### **1.1.3 Curriculum Development in Oman**

The Educational system in Oman is called “Basic Education” which includes Cycle 1 (Grades 1-4) and Cycle 2 (Grades 5-10). This is followed by Grades 11 and 12 which are called “Post-Basic Education.” In grade 12 which is the last grade in the system, students sit National Exams in different subjects of which English is one. Based on their results- the results are in form of letter grades not marks- they can apply to different fields of study in and outside the country’s colleges and universities, both governmental and private.

Throughout the history of curriculum development in Oman, the Ministry of Education has used both commercial publications and-in-house curriculum. With two series of commercial books being used first, five curricula of in-house materials have been developed so far. This shows that Oman intended from the beginning to develop its own curriculum for English Language Teaching. The latest curriculum used started in 1998, is called the Basic Education system.

The rationale for the new English Language Curriculum has been developed to match the general objectives of the Basic Education system in the Sultanate of Oman.

The general objectives of the education system are to:

- reinforce young Omanis’ strong and proud belief in Islamic principles and behaviour, as well as pride in their country, their Gulf heritage, and the Arab world;
- value the diversity of the world’s peoples;
- understand and actively promote equity, justice, peace, and the protection of the environment in their community, Oman, and the world;
- care about their physical, emotional and spiritual health as well as that of others;

- pursue healthy, purposeful lives and develop good work habits and basic life skills;
- acquire knowledge and skills in all areas of the curriculum, including skills in questioning, investigating, critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making;
- apply the skills learned to further studies, work, leisure, daily living and a lifetime of learning;
- use a variety of technologies, demonstrate an understanding of technological applications, apply appropriate technologies for solving problems related to their daily lives, and promote transliteracy;
- raise critical awareness of various forms of arts, and participate in creative activities and expression.
- raise awareness of global issues within the curriculum;
- use English to support, reinforce and consolidate topics in other subject areas;
- present English as an international language and as a means of communication.

(Directorate General of Curriculum Development, 2011, p. 2)

Government schools in Oman use only one English national course book, an in-house curriculum, called English for Me (EfM) for grades 1-10 and 'Engage with English' (EWE) for grades 11-12, which is based on the new reform project. This project started in 1998 which restricted the English Language teaching in Oman. Based on this, English teaching started from grade 1 instead of grade 4 in the previous system as well as some other issues related to teaching methodology and developing a new homemade curriculum. Every school must use this book and is required to finish all of the lessons on time. Therefore the syllabus is seen as the main source of input.

Using only one textbook in the whole Sultanate is an aspect for argument. However, this issue requires further research in order to find out whether there is a need for different textbooks for different regions and is outside the scope of this study. The variety of geographical differences which affect learners' needs and interest might push towards having different textbooks cater for each place and context. However, other issues related to financial and equal opportunities for all children of Oman should be considered too.

#### **1.1.4 Curriculum Components in Oman**

In the Omani curriculum, there are a number of components. There are two types of books for students (Classbooks/Course Books and Skills Books/Workbooks). For the instructor there is a teacher's book, there are audio CDs and resource packs.

The *English for Me* Classbook for grades 1-10 and The *Engage with English* Course Book for Grades 11-12 contain core materials for classroom activities. The *English for Me* Skills Book and the *Engage with English* Workbook provide students with pen-and-paper activities as well as longer exercises that they can complete in their exercise book. The final page of each unit provides an opportunity for students to self-assess and review key items learned (Directorate General of Curriculum Development, 2011).

The Teacher's Book aims to support the teacher in planning their lessons for the semester. The curriculum introduction introduces the aims and the approach adapted and shows ways of managing different types of activities (Directorate General of Curriculum Development, 2011).

The Listening CDs and the Songs and Rhymes CDs feature both native and non-native English speakers with a variety of accents. The listening materials include songs, rhymes,



stories and specific listening tasks for the *English for Me* books, and dialogues (conversations and interviews) and monologues (lectures and storytelling for the *Engage with English* books for Grades 11-12 (Directorate General of Curriculum Development, 2011).

There are two types of resource packs used: The Class Resource Pack (CRP) and the Teacher's Resource Pack (TRP). These are distributed to schools at the beginning of each academic year. They include posters, flashcards, word cards and activity cards, scissors and other supporting materials (Directorate General of Curriculum Development, 2011).

As the key part of curriculum, course books vary in terms of outlook, the approach to learning followed and content. Therefore in most cases, course books help to achieve and cover the objectives of curriculum in different contexts.

### **1.1.5 Curriculum Evaluation in Oman**

For reform initiatives of English language education in Oman, one must start at the Ministry of Education, which seeks to implement changes via a new or revised curriculum. As the principles underlying the approach represented in any new textbook or other educational reform initiative may be novel to the end users (i.e., classroom teachers and learners), problems can arise if there is a lack of explanation, orientation or a lack of effective Curriculum Evaluation process. If this area of Curriculum Evaluation is neglected, the textbook may be abandoned outright, or, more likely, a hidden curriculum could develop, with teaching and learning taking place much as it did prior to the introduction of the innovation (Kennedy, 1987 pp: 164). Therefore, there is a need for a systematic Curriculum Evaluation to support practitioners in the field.

In 2005 a new small department, the Department of Curriculum Evaluation, was founded as part of the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2012). The main aim of having this department was to participate in developing the curriculum based on the learning objectives in Oman, the type of learners and society and the workplace needs (Directorate General of Curriculum Development, 2011). Therefore, there is a need to develop a clear and planned approach for developing and evaluating the curriculum and not to deal with it in an unstructured way.

Every year, the curriculum section of each subject suggests the grade which they expect the Department of Curriculum Evaluation to work on. There can be more than one grade suggested, however it seems that one grade is acceptable considering the shortage of members of the Curriculum Evaluation department. The department uses different curriculum officers including all subjects. They also use the supervision departments and teachers in schools to evaluate the books. For example, if a grade 1 Arabic language course book was selected, the members of Arabic language in the Curriculum Evaluation have to plan the whole evaluation process, but can use members of the Arabic curriculum section, supervisors of Arabic language, Arabic teachers in schools, as well as learners if necessary. The process takes about a whole year. This covers document, field notes analysis and using other instruments including observation, interviews and questionnaires. This covers different schools in different regions, but also covers teachers, students of the grade evaluated and sometimes parents. This coverage might help to provide a good picture of the course book being evaluated.

The department uses mainly document analysis sheets (attached: see Appendix A: Document Analysis sheets) for educational researchers within the Department of Curriculum Evaluation, Curriculum Officers, supervisors and teachers of the same subject.

These intend to be used by researchers to enable course participants and teachers to analyse the tasks and activities they engaged in during a course (Bell, 1999; Wallace, 1991, p.141–64; Krippendorff, 1980, p.21). These sheets include:

Focus Group meetings sheet with teachers: consist of number of questions for teachers done in a form of a meeting after a lesson. The questions cover aspects related to curriculum and assessment within the classroom. They include some general questions about the whole grade, things they like and that suitability to their learners' age and interest.

Pre-Observation discussion and Post-Observation discussion sheet contains some questions. Some of them need to be answered and discussed before the lesson during the Pre-observation discussion and others are discussed after the lessons which are called the post-observation questions.

Teacher's questionnaire contains four sections. There are the student's textbooks, the teacher's book, the resource pack and errors and typos. For the first section there are a number of parts included: objectives, content, activities, assessment, layout/design, listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill, writing skill, grammar, and vocabulary. Each of these parts and the sections includes a number of items which need to be read carefully by teachers and then rank them from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Classroom observation-checklist sheet consists of preparation stage, teaching stage, assessment stage and the implementation difficulties. Throughout these aspects learners are observed which leads to Curriculum Evaluation report.

An Example of an Evaluation Report published in 2011, the Grade 8 English book was analysed and evaluated. By using the sheets and after discussion with a variety of teachers

teaching that grade, this ends up with a final analysis report of that subject. The report (see Appendix B: An example of an Evaluation Report) covers methods and procedures used in the evaluation process, results and discussions, and the recommendations. The recommendations section covers objectives, content, activities, language aspects, and the teacher's book; this covers the Curriculum Evaluation sheets especially the teacher's questionnaire used which discussed before.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Traditionally evaluation takes place through the use of checklists or questionnaires to determine the materials' suitability for use in a particular teaching context (Ellis, 1997). This is what happens in many places such as Oman. Tomlinson (2001) adds that the second move was made by setting certain objectives by which evaluators evaluate in order to provide more reliable information about each curriculum. Later on some attention was given to principles and procedures for developing criteria for specific situations in which the framework used must be determined by the reasons, objectives and circumstances of the evaluation (Tomlinson 1999 & Tomlinson (2001p: 69).

The interaction between the practitioners in schools and officers of the Ministry of Education needs to be clear. The messages sent to teachers of English by different departments need to be planned and smoothly delivered. This covers teaching and methodology issues from the supervision department, professional development from the training department, students' assessment and testing from the assessment department. Other messages on curriculum development and evaluation are sent from the curriculum department. This highlights the importance of having a clear framework for the Curriculum

Evaluation to ensure that the messages sent to teachers make sense to different departments involved in ELT procedures in Oman.

As the researcher has discovered throughout the course of previous research and numerous publications, there is no Curriculum Evaluation framework for the general public in Oman (Al-Jardani, 2011a, 2011b & 2012b). There is only a curriculum framework where evaluation is not included. Developing a framework is expected to help schools in dealing with the issue of Curriculum Evaluation by highlighting how data is collected and analysed in order to feed in the process of curriculum development. Developing a framework would also help to show how, when and who should collect the data, record and store it, and recall it when necessary. This encouraged the researcher to develop a systematic approach for Curriculum Evaluation and also a Curriculum Evaluation framework.

Developing a framework is expected to be beneficial for all parties (Al-Jardani, 2011a; 2011b & 2012b). For example, in the English teaching context, *"having clear standards would help planners at the higher level of training, curriculum, supervision and assessment officers"* (Al-Jardani, 2011a, p. 133). This would also *"help practitioners in the field such as teachers to know what they are expected to do regarding curriculum evaluation"* (Al-Jardani, 2011b, p. 102) and methods used to check what is being covered. It would also *"help the people across Omani society as parents to know what has been covered and what kind of support they need to offer"* (Al-Jardani, 2012b, p. 40). This supports the need to have and further develop a public framework for Curriculum Evaluation. The need for a framework is essential to encourage each development involved to do their job well, however, this can also help with accountability as a basis for assessing and helps to ensure that every part are doing what they are intended to do.

This thesis will develop a framework for Curriculum Evaluation. It starts with working with the officers within the Ministry of Education to assess their perceptions towards developing elements of the framework. This is followed by working directly with 10-15 experts in the field of curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation in order to develop the framework. This takes place by employing two methods: interviewing and giving two sets of questionnaires at different times in order to develop appropriate standards for Curriculum Evaluation, and ending with a complete framework for Curriculum Evaluation. This will be evaluated through a questionnaire highlighting suggested elements for the framework, by the curriculum officers (the main users of it) English supervisors, who are closer to the field and teachers and learners, and some of the Ministry officers from the undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning office who are closer to the policy makers. More details on this will be found in the chapter on methodology.

### **1.3 The Purpose of the Study**

The study intends to develop a framework for the English Language Curriculum in Oman. This should cover the need for different parties involved in the process and issues related to the area of Curriculum Evaluation. This also considers the Omani context of English teaching described which is different from other contexts.

Studying the Omani research areas covered by different researchers, it seems that this area has not been researched in depth before, the area of English Language Curriculum Evaluation framework and for the school levels. There is some other research done within the context of higher education and college levels however, evidence to show any serious work or consideration of the Omani school system's English language teaching is seriously

lacking. It is for this reason that my own research contribution is a timely and pertinent one as it will fill up a gap in pedagogical research that has not yet been addressed appropriately.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1.4.1 The research intends to study the ELT (English Language Teaching) context and the curriculum development area in Oman by looking at the Curriculum Evaluation situation in Oman. This covers analysing how English Language is seen, taught, how English textbooks are developed and evaluated.
- 1.4.2 This study also identifies the need for developing a framework for the Curriculum Evaluation supported by the curriculum officers' point of views in phase 1 of the study. Based on this research, the researcher shall develop a framework for Curriculum Evaluation with the support of a selection of curriculum experts in phase 2. In phase 3, the proposed framework will be tested in the Omani context in order to develop a modified version of the study.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

There will be three phases for the study. Phase 1 which intends to analyse and support the need for the framework; phase 2 development stage and phase 3 will provide an evaluation of the overall framework. Each phase is intended to answer the following questions, which show the research procedure.

##### **1.5.1 Phase 1:**

1. Is there a need for developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation?

Phase 1 helps to state the need for the framework which can be a good start for the experts to develop it during phase 2.

### **1.5.2 Phase 2:**

2. What elements of Curriculum Evaluation should be considered for the framework for Curriculum Evaluation?

This will state the main elements and build them before the evaluation phase of the study.

### **1.5.3 Phase 3:**

3. Are these suggested standards or elements for the Curriculum Evaluation Framework useful in an Omani context?
4. What improvement could be made to the framework after using (testing) it?

## **1.6 Rationale of the Study**

As a Curriculum Officer, the researcher has been involved in visiting schools to see how some of the new course books are being taught. He has visited different regions of Oman in order to support teachers in their understanding of the book, to actively raise teacher-awareness and to help them to discover ways of better implementation for their classes. As a result of these visits, he has begun to realize that teacher's comments about any course differ from one area to another and they seem to be unfocused and unplanned. He would find it difficult to observe a teacher without having a record of their evaluation of the curriculum. On the other hand, observing the Department of Curriculum Evaluation, he cannot see that there is a link between what he gets from the teachers about different course books, and what the department intends to look at and evaluate later on. He thinks that there



is a gap in that sense as a result of miscommunication between the curriculum and the practitioners in the field. For example, some teachers intend to use the teacher's notes exactly as they are although their students' needs and interests might be different. There is mismatch with the philosophy of the curriculum, and with the teaching notes. The notes are only one way to deal with the curriculum and teachers have the right to develop the tasks according to their students' needs. This was one of my rationales towards the need for developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation.

A study (Al-Isaa and Al- Bulushi, 2011) involved 141 first year students from Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, answering an online questionnaire on various issues on how they feel about the education they went through during their school time. One of the main results from this is that teachers show possibly of lack familiarity with the new teaching methods which might be as a result of lack of training as stated in the study. However, this can be seen that there is no document which is stating the main issues of the curriculum requirements, curriculum evaluation issues, assessment procedure and other issues so that every department and officers in each one follow it and even every teacher can have a general picture of what need to be done clearly. The lack of a framework for the public for Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education in Oman has been observed (Al-Jardani, 2011a & 2011b). This has resulted in a miscommunication between the curriculum departments and the practitioners in the field. Building and publicizing a framework, with clear elements, helps to show the role and responsibility of each in developing and evaluating the curriculum. This helps to state the main issue related to curriculum development and evaluation and covers different issues related to the ELT too such as the objectives of textbooks. They stated the bench mark of quality within the curriculum itself and other related areas including the supervising and supporting teachers on teaching the

syllabus well, teaching and assessing methods utilized and other issues related to different departments included in teaching English in the Sultanate.

Moreover, studying a number of frameworks from different contexts such as a training framework (O'Brien, 2005), the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council for Cultural Co-operation, 2001), the Curriculum Framework by the Government of Western Australia (Curriculum Council, 2012) and the State Board of Education in Pennsylvania and California in the US (Department of Education- Pennsylvania, 2012; Department of Education- California, 2012). They seem to be general ones focusing on different subject areas and also do not fit culturally into the Omani context discussed before. As this study focuses on English language curriculum and on the Omani context, there is no such framework which can be developed; therefore there is a need for developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation in Oman.

A joint study by the Ministry of Education and the World Bank (Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 94) has pointed out that the department of Evaluation is a 'small' department. Their duties are to conduct evaluation and suggest modifications on the curriculum. However, the need to support this department is important as stated. Supporting this department in different ways is needed. These study intents to develop a framework for curriculum evaluation which seems to be very important.

As the main area of interest of the researcher is the English Language, the research is only focusing on the need of it for the English Language subject. Working as a teacher and a curriculum officer of English language for the last 17 years encouraged him to see the need for a framework for the Curriculum Evaluation for English Language at this time by observing different issues discussed before. This encouraged him to focus only on the

English subject. Another consideration is that these areas of course book evaluation and varying perceptions and expectations have not been fully researched in Oman, and therefore warrant further investigation.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

After researching using various data search engines such as Google and national libraries such as the Sultan Qaboos University Library, the main and the only governmental university in Oman, it seems that the topic of developing framework standards is somewhat new for the field of education. However, in fields like health, business and higher education, it appears that this process is more common. For example, regarding health, when someone enters a health centre, there is a prominently displayed poster of stated standards for the whole health centre (Al-Jardani, 2011a; 2011b). This includes the centre's vision, mission statement, objectives and other issues. These standards can be used and considered when planning training for any specific job title within the centre, for example, as ways of helping nurses to do their best and ensure a good quality performance. This is also observed in universities where vision, mission statements and objectives are clearly shown for all - officers, students and academic staff alike.

The need to develop this for education as well and to develop certain elements in a written framework publicised for the whole system is essential. However, a framework for Curriculum Evaluation is also needed. This might be based on generic studies so that they could be used in different contexts. These studies need to result in creating a framework for Curriculum Evaluation; testing it in context and then producing a final version. This would support the field of education in general and to Curriculum Evaluation in particular.

Apart from these, developing a framework would help to create a unique document, so every staff member or every department would plan to achieve the main objectives for example from their own side. This would also help to develop a fair progress assessment in different parties. This includes assessing teachers for example whether they have achieved the learning objectives as well as the learners. The availability of this framework would guarantee working in the same direction towards achieving the planned goals.

### **1.8 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

In summary, this study will cover the area of Curriculum Evaluation in Oman. It intends to develop a framework for Curriculum Evaluation for the English Language and relate it to that specific national context. The work will be driven by a review of the existing literature, and the ideas of the participants including Curriculum Evaluation officers and the experts selected. Selecting the participants affects the research in the sense of the quality and-speed, therefore, a careful selection of the participants, and especially of the experts, is essential.

Planning of the research and selection of the appropriate research approach and methods would help to produce a better quality of finding and ultimately a more usable framework for Curriculum Evaluation. There are a number of elements that need to be considered for this study to produce a better result: setting the data collection methods, the quality of questions, time availability for participants and if the data collected is enough to draw useful and usable conclusions.

The limitation of the study covers the scope of it discussed. In addition the researcher being part of curriculum might have affected the participants' responses especially in phase 1 of the study as he was part of the curriculum evaluation process. However, for phases 2 and 3

the influence is less. Therefore, they might be an influence in need analysis of the framework but this seems to reduce in developing and evaluating the framework phases.

## **1.9 Definitions of Terms**

The key concepts of the Curriculum Evaluation area can be defined in the following section and the researcher shall employ these definitions in his analysis.

### **1.9.1 Curriculum**

Curriculum includes all the materials used for a teaching context such as the course book, teacher's book (notes), teacher's work, students' work, teaching aids and what the teacher and learners bring to the classroom in order to facilitate and help teachers to teach and learners to learn (Cunningsworth, 1995; McGrath, 2002, p. 7; Tomlinson, 2001).

### **1.9.2 Curriculum Evaluation**

Curriculum Evaluation can be defined as a systematic process of collecting and analyzing all relevant information for the purpose of judging and assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum to promote improvement (Nichols, et al. 2006, p. 37; Marsh, 2004, p. 106 and Brown, 1995, p. 218).

### **1.9.3 Frameworks**

Frameworks normally consist of a rationale or platform, scope and sequence, aims, goals and purpose of subjects, guidelines for course design, teaching and learning principles, *guidelines for evaluation of subjects*, criteria for accreditation and certification of subjects and future developments for the area (Marsh, 2004, p. 21).

#### **1.9.4 A framework for Curriculum Evaluation**

A framework for Curriculum Evaluation can be a set of elements of quality statements of good practice (O'Brien, 2005, p. 16) shown as a clear planned guideline of needs analyses, aims, focuses, purposes, types, methods, etc. of Curriculum Evaluation.

#### **1.10 The Outline of the Study**

The research is divided into 6 chapters. In the introduction, a clear plan of the study is stated. This starts with a contextual framework which covers how English Language is seen in Oman, how it is taught, curriculum development and evaluation in Oman. It also covers the statement of the problem identified, research objectives and questions, the rationale, the significance and scope and limitation of the study. The chapter ends with highlighting the definition of terms used within the study. Chapter 2 highlights the key points discussed in the existing literature related to the topic of Curriculum Evaluation covering both conceptual and theoretical framework and previous studies related to the study. This is followed by chapter 3 where which describes the methodology used in this study. This covers the developmental research utilized within the study, the data collection methods, a description of the participants, the research procedure, the ethics and the piloting stage, ending with analysis of the data. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and Chapter 5 will discuss the findings, highlight recommendations and draw the conclusions of my study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This study intends to develop a framework for Curriculum Evaluation in Oman as discussed before. This section highlights different aspects and previous studies of the topic of curriculum and curriculum evaluation and presents some examples of the curriculum frameworks from different contexts which provide some guidelines when developing a framework for the Omani context. This chapter provided a solid background and state the theoretical and Conceptual framework of the study.

The chapter is divided into 3 sections. This includes the concept of curriculum covering the role of curriculum and the need for published course books. The second section covers the concept of curriculum evaluation, highlighting purpose of Curriculum Evaluation and who should be involved, dimensions of evaluation, interaction among dimensions, gathering the information, and the result of evaluation. The third section covers the theoretical framework and previous studies including models of curriculum, and studies on Curriculum Evaluation and on developing a framework.

#### **2.1 Concept of Curriculum**

Curriculum includes all the materials used in a teaching context such as the course book, teacher's book, teacher's work, students' work, teaching aids and what the teacher and learners bring to the classroom in order to facilitate and help teachers to teach and learners to learn (Cunningsworth, 1995; McGrath, 2002, p. 7 & Tomlinson, 2001).

Ornstein & Hunkins (2013, p. 8-9) specified five definitions of curriculum. They defined it as a plan for achieving goals, dealing with learner's experience, a system for dealing with

people, a field of study and finally as a subject matter as it covers a number of subjects. This shows that definition of curriculum can cover all of these aspects. On the other hand, Oliva & Gordon, 2013, p. 6 related the definition of curriculum to three dimensions that different authors are relating curriculum to. They are the goals and the purposes of a curriculum, the contexts in which the curriculum is developed and the strategies and methods used within the curriculum itself. This highlights the key main theories of curriculum.

The term curriculum is wider than the term 'syllabus'. This refers to the whole content needs to be covered within a certain system (White, 1988, p. 4). For the Omani context this covers all subjects within the system, this covers the Islamic studies, Arabic language, English language, Mathematics, Science, Social studies and others. Curriculum also covers all types of materials used in the classroom including visual, written, audio and materials which could be printed, contained on a CD or used as an Internet source. It also covers both theoretical and practical work done in a classroom. Tomlinson (2001) adds that the materials might be presented, elicited or may be things presented to learners to be discovered. A curriculum covers apart from the content three other elements; the objectives, the methods utilized and also the evaluation part. For White (1988, p. 5), the evaluation part is mainly seen as feedback or '*mentoring*' is an important aspect for quality control of the whole system, which seems to be unclear for the Omani context with the absence of a framework for Curriculum Evaluation.

### **2.1.1 The Role of Curriculum**

Curriculum plays an important role in the classroom (Cunningsworth, 1995; Tomlinson, 2001 & White, 1988). Some educators see the course book as the main resource for the teacher to decide how to use-and how useful it is (Williams, 1983, p. 251). Hutchinson and



Torres (1994) support this on the grounds that the course book is part of the whole curriculum, plays a vital part in the learning and teaching process and is also central in periods of change.

In some institutions, states and countries the curriculum is seen as the main source of knowledge and input for both teachers and learners. It focuses on what a learner in each context actually needs and then plans to cover it in the course book. Richards (1998), however, highlights the concerns of some of these practices:

*Teachers in some parts of the world tend to assume that any item included in a textbook must be an important learning item for learners, and that explanations (e.g. of grammar rules or idioms) and cultural information provided by the author are true and should not be questioned; they assume they do not have the authority or knowledge to adapt the textbook. They likewise believe that activities found in a textbook are superior to ones that they could devise themselves (Richards, 1998, p. 131).*

These and other negative practices should be clearly stated within the curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation framework, and also within-teacher training, both in pre- and in-service training. Teachers and other practitioners should address the need for a curriculum and a course book, but they should have the right to adapt and change things to fit their learners' particular needs and interests. They should feel as if they have more authority to challenge what is in the textbook.

Within the Omani context, the curriculum is also accompanied by a teacher's book. It is a detailed book showing the teacher everything that they would need to know about the textbook. It highlights the underlying principles and the methodology of the whole course and some details of the grade. It also shows very detailed teaching notes which seem to

guide teachers and even oblige teachers to follow it without deviation. However, the curriculum department keep on commenting that these notes are only one way of dealing with the book and that it is the teacher's role to develop it and adapt it according to their learners' needs and interest.

To sum up, the curriculum is seen as a reference and a source of materials and activities which are helpful for both teachers and learners. These activities can be used inside and outside the classroom both for direct use and self-access work. Cunningsworth (1995, p. 5) highlights the idea that the only purpose of the curriculum is to serve its users but not to control their actions and what they should say. In the next section, the need for published course books will be examined.

### **2.1.2 The Need for Published Coursebooks**

To learn a language or a skill, there is a need for a course book. The researcher has experienced learning two languages, English and Malay, and he cannot imagine learning them without a course book. For example, the course book provided for the learner learning the Malay language with the University of Malaya is a useful source of vocabulary, sentence structure and can be seen as a reference for revision. A course book is useful as it gives guidelines about how to learn and is also a source of vocabulary and grammar points. It is basically a reference which you can easily go back to and in which you can check your understanding of any word at any time.

It looks as if there is almost universal agreement that there is a need for a course book; however there is a debate about how much should be in the course book and how much freedom should be given to the teacher. Tomlinson (2001, p. 67) states that a course book gives "a sense of a system, cohesion, and progress and helps teachers prepare and learners

revise". However, he adds that although a course book helps with all of that, it cannot cover all the target learners' needs nor all their grammatical needs and might, moreover, restrict learners and teachers to a specific approach in teaching and learning

McGrath (2002) supports this, as a course book shows a map of the things planned to be covered in any given school lesson. This will help teachers to plan their lessons well and ensure they cover all aspects of materials within a specific period of time. However, having a course book may affect learners and teachers negatively as it will limit learners' initiative and interest in looking for more information and the teachers from trying out different teaching material and methods, leading them only to adhere to the approach and the content in the course book.

The educational system in any country or institution needs a course book with different levels (McGrath 2002). This need differs in level and importance according to governments, teachers, parents, learners, officers and others. They all need a clear and to-the-point course book which can achieve their requirements and ensure good quality. This is just as true of school-based personnel such as teachers, principals and parents as it is of industry and community groups, government agencies and politicians (Marsh, 2004).

A government needs a curriculum to make sure they provide equal exposure of a language or information to learners in the whole country. For example, in Oman only one course book is used all over the country, The *English for Me* and *Engage with English* series in this case. The rationale of this is mainly that the Ministry of Education wants to ensure that all learners get equal learning input and opportunity and then sit for the same exam. This is a contentious issue as there is a need for different textbooks and a need to set for different exams according to what learners in different contexts are exposed to. However, the

funding point seems to be the key point for the government decision. Developing different textbooks requires funding as well as a greater effort to be made to encourage authors and materials.

Officers in different departments such as supervision, assessment, training, curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation need to have a clear curriculum. The curriculum department only has to develop one course book for each grade. It should be noted here that the writing of one course is not an easy task as the course book has to cater for learners' needs and interests for all Oman, taking into account, for example, learners with different backgrounds, knowledge, needs and interests. Another aspect is that along with the course book, there is also a need for supplementary materials including printed and non-printed materials. Extra supplementary tasks which are put in separate booklets can help students to practice the language more; others such as audio and video devices can also play a good role in supporting learners' learning the target language.

In the next section, the concept of Curriculum Evaluation will be highlighted, its different purposes and different types as found in the existing literature.

## **2.2 Concept of Curriculum Evaluation**

In this section, the concept of Curriculum Evaluation will be discussed. It will cover the following: what Curriculum Evaluation is; its different purposes, audience, dimensions and methods of evaluation; the interaction among these dimensions; the gathering of evaluation data; the result of the evaluation and it will end with an examination of how the framework for evaluation is addressed in the existing literature.

### 2.2.1 What is “Curriculum Evaluation”?

Different definitions of Curriculum Evaluation are found in the existing literature about the topic. It can be defined as a systematic process for collecting and analyzing all relevant information for the purpose of judging and assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum to promote improvement (Brown, 1995, p. 218; Marsh, 2004, p. 106 and Nichols, et al. 2006, p. 37). The definition consists of key words such as ‘*systematic*’, ‘*process*’, ‘*collect*’ and ‘*analyse*’, ‘*relevant information*’, ‘*curriculum effectiveness assessment*’, and ‘*to improve.*’

Curriculum Evaluation can be either a small-scale task involving a very limited number of participants if it is classroom based, or a massive large-scale task involving a number of schools, teachers, parents, officers and some community members. An action research exercise conducted by a teacher in his/her class with learners can also be part of Curriculum Evaluation. On the other hand, an internal or external evaluator evaluating a whole curriculum covering several schools, a large number of teachers and learners, and which may additionally cover the schools’ surroundings, may also constitute Curriculum Evaluation.

There are some common characteristics of different types of Curriculum Evaluation. It starts with needs analysis which is on-going as it never finishes (Brown, 1995). It is a continuous process, as there is a need to look again at the changing needs from time to time. This shows that there is a need for Curriculum Evaluation within any curriculum system and within any teaching and learning process. It cannot be merely one short task and, although that can be a part of the overall evaluation, it cannot be all of it. Generally, Curriculum Evaluation helps to connect all other elements of curriculum and also to highlight positive and negative issues related to these elements, such as the aims, goals and

purpose of different subjects, guidelines for course design, teaching and learning principles and others. Brown (1995, p. 217) says that the absence of Curriculum Evaluation will result in the other elements lacking cohesion.

A need for both internal (insider) and external (outsider) evaluation is necessary. Moreover, evaluation should cover both the result of the curriculum and the planning of it, too. (Marsh, 2004, p. 107; Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 123). These points and others will be discussed in the next sections of the Curriculum Evaluation section of this thesis.

### **2.2.2 The Purpose of Curriculum Evaluation**

As there are different types of evaluation, the purpose of each type will differ in needs, and stages. Cunningsworth (1995, p. 14) stated that the purpose of an evaluation can be to achieve one of these things: to adopt a new course book, or to identify good and bad points about an existing course book. In addition, it can also be used to compare different course books utilized in a particular curriculum or programme.

Curriculum Evaluation focuses on collecting information about different aspects of a language programme in order to understand how it works and how successfully it works to enable decision making (Richards, 2001, p. 286) on the future of a certain curriculum. These decisions could be whether the programme succeeds in responding to learners' needs and whether learners are learning well, or whether there is a need for some further action such as adapting and changing the programme or re-developing teachers' training programmes.

There is a need for a preparatory stage for any evaluation as in any other task (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 125; Nichols, et al. 2006). This includes whether the whole evaluation

is worth doing, is necessary or whether it is even possible to be conducted at this particular time. In the preparatory stage, the planner needs to get answers as to how long it would take, and how much it might cost. Some other questions also needs to be taken into account, for example the willingness of the evaluator and of the participants such as teachers to be part of the study and also what kind of evidence the evaluation will aim to gather (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 125).

Based on the preparation stage, the evaluation will have a different focus. The following list is a possible focus of an evaluation suggested by Sanders (1992) and Weir and Roberts (1994) in Richards (2001, p. 286-287). This can include curriculum design, the syllabus and programme content, classroom processes, material of instruction, the teachers, teacher training, the students, monitoring of students' progress, learner motivation, the institution (school), learning environment, staff development and decision making within the Ministry of Education or at a school level.

This can be a base list; however the evaluator or the evaluation organisations need to have their own list according to the purpose of the particular evaluation they are conducting.

By contrast, Nation and Macalister (2010, p. 125) stated a number of stages, which include the preparatory stage:

1. Who the evaluation is for and what kind of information they need?
2. What the evaluation will be used for?; to improve the course? to determine whether to keep a course or to replace it with another?
3. Is the evaluation needed?
4. How much time and money is needed or available for the evaluation?
5. What kind of information will be gathered?

6. Gain the support of the people involved
7. How to gather the information and who will be involved?
8. How to present the findings
9. Follow-up evaluation to check the implantations of the findings
10. Evaluate the evaluation (was it valid, reliable and practical?)

Since the new course book started in 1998 written by textbook writers, a mixture of native English speakers and national educationalists, which is about 14 years old, the Basic Education course book: The *English for Me* series (Grades 1-10) and *Engage with English* series (grades 11 and 12) is still the purpose of any evaluation which seeks to work towards covering school material which is not done until date. Therefore, the main purpose of any Curriculum Evaluation at least during the coming five years is mostly to identify good things about the existing course to maintain. Also a focus will be placed upon the bad or weak areas to adapt and develop partly. The purpose of comparing different courses is not practical at least now as there is only one relevant course book available. There is an old one done during the eighties which seems to be out of date regarding the methodology and the information included.

However, looking back at the existing course book and the long time to take to be put into the field will not be an encouraging experience unless enriching the curriculum department with more of qualified manpower or finding good commercial books which need to be adapted anyway. This area is also in need of a clear and planned research. Developing a clear planned evaluation process is a key issue in order to develop a good evaluation. This should be based on needs analysis, the evaluation's purpose and the co-operation of others with the evaluator. Understanding what should be involved in the evaluation and how to



involve all parties dealing with English teaching in Oman, will be highlighted in the next section.

### **2.2.3 Who Should be Involved?**

There are two types of participants, insiders and outsiders (Richards, 2001, p. 296). Insiders are those who are involved directly in developing and implementing the course. These might be teachers, learners, and curriculum officers. The insider participants or evaluators can work better with the formative type of evaluation, which will be discussed later. Outsiders are others who are not involved directly in developing or implementing the course. They may be people such as consultants or administrators who help to identify the insiders' perceptions of the course and how it is working inside the classroom. This study employed similar theory in phase 2 when developing the framework by using curriculum experts from different organisations some of whom were not related to the Ministry of Education.

There is a need to involve both insiders and outsiders in the evaluation depending on its purpose (Marsh, 2004, p. 8). However, in order to identify whether it is necessary to involve anyone in Curriculum Evaluation, there is a need to answer these four questions for each of the participants:

1. What kind of information might the teacher/learner/parent/officer/or others supply?
2. How useful is this information?
3. How could this information be elicited/gathered?
4. How can this information be organised and recalled when needed?

Course evaluation looks at both strengths and weaknesses, but it is naturally the weaknesses that cause concern. This stresses that people involved in the exercise need to be involved in the overall process, in the planning stage as well as in carrying out of the evaluation (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 128). For this reason, some organisations such as the Ministry of Education in Oman do consider trying to involve an outside-evaluator who develops an easier interaction and agreement on how to do the evaluation. If the evaluator fails to gain the co-operation and interest of the staff by meeting them and showing the need and the purpose of the evaluation, then the evaluation cannot be succeed.

This can involve learners, teachers, senior teachers, the school principal, the school supervisor, Ministry officers, parents, consultants and others. Some of these people can be part of the evaluation but this will depend on the focus and the purpose of the evaluation.

Teachers are the greatest users of a curriculum and understand their own learners best (Jolly & Bolitho, 1998, p. 111). Talking to different teachers in different contexts, using different textbooks, it seems that they have common problems regarding the curriculum. The main issues teachers face are listed by McGrath (2002):

- The course book is difficult so teachers intend to teach slowly, not finishing the book or, the easiest way, skipping bits of it.
- Inappropriate: this might include cultural issues, situation or context, impracticability or perhaps the difficulty of the material for the teacher or learner to understand.

Teachers can develop a clear method of collecting data. They can keep a record of the course book use and learners' observation and test records. This could be done through

conducting teachers' meetings where they can exchange ideas and collect data about the use of the course. This also could involve discussing ways to improve and select a better course book.

Teachers can participate in selecting a course book and even evaluating it. In some countries such as Oman there is only one course book for the whole country. However, as has been observed, there is a need to evaluate not only the superficial aspects of a course (McGrath, 2002, p. 12) or how the book looks, but to “get into” the materials themselves. The teacher will be the key evaluator in such cases.

An important issue which is highlighted by Williams (1983, p. 253) is that teachers on the training course need to be trained in principles of course book evaluation, and could be given practical chances to analyse the materials. Masuhara (1998, p. 241) highlights that teachers' needs can be personal as well as professional. The personal needs include the fact that teachers need to understand the cultural and educational background in which the learning is taking place. Concerning professional needs, language proficiency and in-service training are examples of how these needs can be catered for. The idea of identifying whether training courses include issues related to Curriculum Evaluation can be researched in a different context.

The Curriculum Evaluation sheets produced by the evaluation department discussed in the previous chapter, seems to use teachers in pre-observation and post-observation discussion. They also use classroom observations by outsiders in the form of a checklist, during the Focus Group meetings with teachers as well as in the teacher's questionnaire. These sheets mainly focus on teachers' perceptions of the curriculum and the learners' reactions towards too. This is mainly as they are the main users of the curriculum and the ones who we are

tested whether they have done it well as if their learners were able to succeed. The issue of including the Curriculum Evaluation principles within the training courses can be searched and found out in the analysis stage of this study. However there is a clear need to have these skills even to help themselves to analyse their students' reaction and development towards learning the language and how to support them more.

It can also be argued that the main user of a curriculum is the learner. Materials development can be at its most effective when it covers the needs of the target learners (Jolly & Bolitho, 1998, p. 110). These needs can be personal as well as learning and future needs (Masuhara, 1998, p. 240). Personal needs can cover the culture and interests of learners. Learning needs covers the gap between the target level and present level in information and competencies such as skills and strategies. In the future needs must address the use and the knowledge of language or languages that learners are going to use. Learners seem to be the key users as they have to do the tasks and be evaluated based on the course principles and input.

There are different ways to gather information about a course from the learners. These may include conferencing and discussion, group interviews or focus groups, questionnaires which could be done during any micro-evaluation and which might include such tools as rating slips. Other ways are through learners' diaries about the course and how they deal with it and still other methods include such tools as learners' self-evaluation, or assessment, and portfolios can give an indication of how the course is running and what the outcome of the course is. These methods will be discussed in the section of my study which addresses information gathering.

However, care must be taken to distinguish as to whether the information gathered might be the effect of the course alone or whether it includes such matters as teachers' involvement and personalities, self-access work and parents involvement.

The key use of learners noted in the Curriculum Evaluation department sheets is that observing teachers to see how learners are managing the curriculum. Further, teachers might be able to get some chances to discuss them with the learners directly. There are also some general self-assessment tasks within the English course books at the end of each unit which can be seen as distractors- i.e., those which stop learners from smooth learning- by some experts and others can see them as a way to assess the learners themselves of what they managed to do with that unit. These tasks can be used whether by their teachers and visitors to understand how learners think about their course book and each unit.

Senior teachers, supervisors and a school's principal and officers can be involved as coordinators in the evaluation process. They can help teachers to collect and organize the information (McGrath (2002, p. 189) and in record keeping. They can also help in observing and discussing with teachers issues related to Curriculum Evaluation and in clarifying those issues.

Senior teachers and the supervisors are expected to support teachers in doing their best in their jobs. They help teachers especially new ones to develop a clear picture of the course book and best practice, and then follow them regularly. Apart from this, they can also help in keeping record of their classroom observations, discussions and meeting them usually conducting during their school visits. The issue is to what extent are trained on evaluation aspects within the training programmes and their willingness to support in these issues as it is not one of their key supervision roles.

The role of the senior teacher, supervisors and even school principal should be done systematically using a clear planned approach of data collection towards help Curriculum Evaluation officers to get clear comments from the teachers, learners directly and also other data collected over a period of time.

Officers from different departments in the Ministry of Education can also be part of the evaluation process as coordinators. They can help in the observation work and also in the discussion periods and meetings. However, there is a need for cooperation between the officers themselves as they might be from different departments including: curriculum, Curriculum Evaluation, supervision, learners' assessment, and training departments. Their role in the evaluation process needs to be specified. Based on their needs seen as "institutional needs" (Masuhara, 1998, p. 241), they are expected to consider different aspects related to the development of a curriculum. This covers developing the educational policy and the key aims and objectives of the system, considering social and political needs, market and workplace requirements and other organisational issues such as the number of periods allocated for the subject, the resources and the budget available.

Within the Omani context, the key role players in this matter are the officers of the Curriculum Evaluation. They need to set the whole process within the Ministry itself by contacting different departments related to the evaluated course book, so they would be happy participate and then make the changes needed afterwards, and also within the school levels and the directorates within each governorate. Involving all different parties in the process especially officers of the different departments would help to look at the curriculum from different sides. This is basically as it is not only a good course book which makes the curriculum any better as they are different aspects need to be considered. By having officers of the supervision department, issues related to senior teachers, supervisors can be

better checked and evaluated. The same things related to training involvement; their participation will give the trainee teachers' side more focus and can help to develop a better report at the end of the process. This happens to other parties such as the curriculum writers and students assessment departments.

Parents and society can also be enlisted to help to address their children's difficulties and ways to overcome them. On the other hand, society can follow up the aims covered and the needs and interests of the country in general to be addressed in each curriculum. The private sector and workplace need be considered in developing the curriculum and also in the evaluation stage. Considering the needs of the workplace, the employee's skills and competence may be covered within the curriculum in order to develop good students.

A need for a public framework is clearly required in this sense at least to inform the society and the workplace of what are the general aims and outcomes of the educational system in Oman and English Language teaching in particular. A symposium on English for the workplace was held in 2008 in Sultan Qaboos University, and the researcher of this study was one of the developers, planners and organisers. It is not enough to highlight these important issues and to make a clear and useful interaction between the policy makers of the two main parties: the general and the private sector. Conducting some research on such a topic is vital.

Looking through the existing literature on types of Curriculum Evaluation shows that there are various types. Some researchers call them 'types' while others call them 'dimensions.' In the following section, different dimensions of evaluation are presented.

#### **2.2.4 Dimensions of Evaluation**

In order to analyse Curriculum Evaluation, the existing literature enumerates different dimensions and these are related to the individual views of each writer. They involve Macro/Micro evaluation, Pre/In/Post use evaluation, and Formative/Summative evaluation, Long/Short term evaluation, Cognitive/Affective/Resource factors and Quantitative/Qualitative measurements.

Focusing on what is to be evaluated, there are 2 types of evaluation: macro and micro evaluation. As can be inferred from the title, macro –evaluation is where the focus is on general issues, the outlook of the course book and the approach used. McDonough and Shaw, (1993, p. 67-71) call this External Evaluation.

In the view of a number of writers, most published materials and publishers mainly focus on macro-evaluation (Alderson 1985; Breen and Candlin 1987; Cunningsworth 1995; Donovan 1998; Rea-Dicins 1994; Tribble, 1996; J.B. Brown 1997; Johnson and Johnson 1998 in Tomlinson, 2001).

On the other hand, focusing on the lesson plan, steps and the set of methods and teaching materials used within a course is called micro-evaluation (Ellis, 1997; McGrath, 2002) and McDonough and Shaw (1993, p. 75-77) call this Internal Evaluation. Micro- evaluation usually focuses on one aspect of a course or a programme. This helps to establish whether this aspect can work with a specific level of learners, finds out its weaknesses and looks for ways to improve it (Ellis, 1997). An important thing to remember is that this can be utilized only during the course. For the researcher context, there is a need for both. Evaluating the course book's layout and the design as well as every detail of the content is required. Based



on this macro and micro evaluation can be planned at different levels of the curriculum especially at the implementation stage of the new model of curriculum discussed before.

Ellis (1997) suggested that there is an urgent need for 'empirical evaluation' of teaching material. One way to do this is through micro-evaluation of specific activities. This helps teachers pay attention to Curriculum Evaluation as they plan their classes and encourages them to go beyond the impressionistic assessment to develop a better understanding of what is to be evaluated and how it can be done. A good example of this, a practical preparation sheets which are used within schools created by the supervision department includes spaces for teachers to comment before, while and after teaching a lesson. This can be used as they might be very useful and practical comments about learners learning and also curriculum issues and errors encountered.

The idea of developing and encouraging a systematic approach of 'Action Research' is very important. This could be developed within conducting a micro-evaluation which can be part of the professional development of teachers. Action research as a method of gathering data will be discussed in the section on gathering information. The training department in Oman develops kinds of courses for teachers of different levels. Teachers attend a course of two parts, theoretical input for some sessions followed by an action research. Teachers intend to do research within their classroom to solve some of their English teaching problems or any behaviour issues.

Focusing on when to evaluate a curriculum, there are 3 types - pre, in and post –use evaluation. Cunningsworth (1995, p. 14) considered that pre-use evaluation as the most difficult type as there is no experience of using the course book. Therefore, we need to be careful when using this type and give the process enough time. Therefore, Tomlinson

(2001) says that the main problem of using the pre-use evaluation instruments by the teacher or any other evaluator is that it takes much time and effort.

Pre-use evaluation is a type of evaluation used mainly at the course selection stage. It is a stage which helps to establish possible suitability to the context and the expected target learners. This seems to be not possible for the Omani context as there should be a course book in schools all the time unless they can do this even with the existing course book.

In-use evaluation aims to check the decision of the course selection in the pre-use stage (Cunningsworth, 1995; McGrath, 2002). It also addresses what worked well and what was changed during teaching the course. This helps to gather information about all teaching stages, planning, implementation, and also the reconsideration of the whole course selection.

After continuous use of a course book, post-evaluation helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the course book (Cunningsworth, 1995; McGrath, 2002). This type of evaluation helps to decide whether to keep using the course book or not. This also helps in cases where there is only one course used so that a decision of keeping, adapting or developing a new course book needs to take place.

Both the in- and post-evaluation can be used together, the former to find out the immediate changes done to make it better for learners and the latter to find out good and bad issues about in order to decide keeping it, adapting or finding or writing a new course book.

Focusing on the purpose of the evaluation, there is also formative/summative evaluation. Summative evaluation, the most common type of evaluation, has is aimed at making a summary or judgment about the quality or adequacy of different aspects of the course. This

might result in comparing it with other courses, or judging it as fulfilling certain criteria or not (Brown, 1995; Nation & Macalister, 2010; Richards, 2001, p. 288-293). This seems to be close to the post evaluation in the sense of when it is done and its result of it, as they intend to find good and bad issues about it and whether it met certain criteria and outcomes.

Formative evaluation has the purpose of forming or shaping the course to improve it in order to find out what is working well and what is not and what problems can be identified. Normally with this type of evaluation, the information collected is used to address those problems and to suggest ways to improve the delivery of the course (Brown, 1995; Nation & Macalister, 2010; Richards, 2001, p. 288). For formative evaluation, this can be developed within the course (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 126).

There are a number of ways to develop a formative evaluation as part of a course, including those suggested by Nation and Macalister (2010, p. 133). These includes parts of the course can be negotiated between the teacher and the learners. Extra tasks and texts can be chosen by both teachers and learners, peer teacher visits and productive observation of the course, meetings among teachers to discuss progress of a course, self-evaluation tasks both for teachers and learners, development of course evaluation forms and finally inviting as outsider to evaluate some aspects of the course.

Analysing different details and getting feedback using different tools are important. The Nation and Macalister list can be observed used within the Omani context, this shows that there are enough input and data collected easily found. The key question here is whether these data are collected and evaluated enough when it comes to the evaluation stage.

We also need to decide whether to plan for long-term or short-term evaluation. Most evaluations are short-term (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 126). Long-term evaluation is

most economically done if it is planned as a part of curriculum design. However, some important features of a course cannot be validly evaluated in a short-term evaluation. These include quality of teaching and learner achievement. Therefore, in this case planned long-term evaluation is essential.

The evaluation observed within the Curriculum Evaluation department in Oman seems to be in a very short term bases. Basically every year, officers of each subject intend to do one complete evaluation for a grade. A report will be distributed at the end of each academic year. This is intended to be short term; however a plan is needed to do a long term one where data of formative and summative input are collected systematically over a long time.

Another dimension is whether the evaluation will include cognitive, affective and resource factors. Cognitive factors involve learning and teaching, gaining of knowledge and the application of that knowledge after the course has ended. This will help to show whether the course has improved learners' work or performance and many other issues related to learning and teaching.

Affective factors involve evaluating feelings and attitudes. This will find out if the teacher and learner feel the course is effective and other things related to attitudes and how the course affects that. Resources factors involve cost, profit, availability, quality of teaching and learning resources (Nation & Macalister (2010, p. 127) such as books, and other resources. The size of the class and the availability of books in the resource centre are examples of the resource factor.

There is a need to include the three factors as they are all important. Finding out about the learners' performance is as important as their feelings towards the language and the course book and the availability of the resources to ensure continuous learning.

The last dimension which can be discussed is the quantitative/qualitative measurement. Quantitative measurement refers to measurement of things that can be expressed in numbers. Tests can be marked and shown in the form of frequencies and percentages. Other things such as checklists and surveys can be evaluated by this kind of measurement too (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2001). Qualitative measurement measures things which cannot be shown in the form of numbers. This information is usually in the form of subjective judgment and can cover information collected from classroom observation, interviews, case studies and other methods (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2001, p. 296).

For both types of data and analysis, the focus of analysis is also important as each method needs to be analyzed differently. For any quantitative and qualitative data there is a need for a careful analysis of all patterns of findings before getting into conclusions or more of follow-up.

In some cases, both types of measurements are used together, for example a test cannot be analyzed using the quantitative method. The observer also needs to use qualitative measurement as using both sides can be very useful in obtaining an accurate picture of the course and its effectiveness.

Looking through the sheets used by the Curriculum Evaluation department requires both types of measurement. There is need to analyse numbers and also the oral and written feedback. This requires knowledge of analysing qualitative and quantitative data.

After presenting different dimensions of evaluation and how they are looked at, the following section will highlight how to use these dimensions together. This will show how to choose from them according to the evaluator's needs.

### 2.2.5 Interaction among Dimensions

Categorizing the focus of evaluation into a number of dimensions helps planners to choose the right one from each dimension and then develop the right process (Brown, 1995). This will also assist in choosing the appropriate methods for data collection. For example, carrying out small scale research by a teacher is mainly a formative, in-use evaluation and any other dimension which he/she can choose from. This will help him/her to be more focused and then to choose the right process and the methods of data collection.

### 2.2.6 Gathering the Information

There are different methods of gathering the information for the purposes of evaluation. Some of these are more closely related to some of the evaluation dimensions, and other methods are also more closely related to other dimensions.

White (1988, p. 155) highlights a number of methods of data collection for different types of data. Table 2.1 is adapted from his book.

Table 2.1

Methods of data collection

Type of data	Method
Methods, classroom procedure	Use of materials, observation, diaries and journals, interviews, peer appraisal, questionnaires, ranking and self-report rating scales, checklists, teachers records, learners' feedback, action research, audi-

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	video recoding
Content	questionnaires, interviews, document analysis, course book , texts, ranking and rating scales, checklists, action research
Learning achievement	Tests, assignment, case study, action research

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Source: Adapted from White, 1988: 155

As can be seen, these methods include use of materials, interviews, questionnaires/self-report scales, observation and checklists, tests, diaries and journals, teachers' records, learners' feedback, case studies, audio-video recording and action research.

Using the materials would be the main thing to analyse and develop. Jolly and Bolitho (1998, p. 112) added that there is a need for a trial stage for the curriculum in order to ensure successful materials. Questions like what worked well and what difficulties teachers and learners face when using a course book and any supplementary materials can only be answered if the course book is tried. Users of a course book are teachers, learners and the whole society (McGrath, 2002, p. 14).

Interviewing is a method usually carried out on a one to one basis but is also done with a group of participants. This is sometimes also called conferencing or focus groups, where the evaluator discusses with a group of teachers, learners, officers or any other group. Interviews can be structured, unstructured or in some cases semi-structured (Nation and Macalister, 2010, p. 128). For Richards (2001, p. 300) structured interviews are more useful than unstructured ones. This might be because the points discussed in the interviews-have been pre-selected and are based on the need and focus of the evaluation.

For schools, conferencing learners, seems to be one of the useful methods for data collection, as they appears to talk about different issues and their classmates support them by providing samples from the course book and examples. On the other hand, talking to English school teachers and discussing their perceptions about the course book and ways to develop it better for their learners can be also useful. In order to gather a considerable amount of information from a large number of people, (Richards, 2001, p. 301) and where there is then a need to summarize this information to develop a picture of the context, there is a need for a questionnaire. Nation and Macalister (2010, p. 129) called these: Self-report scales.

This method of gathering information seems to be commonly used in Oman by the Department of Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education. However, what is commonly observed in the questionnaires should be highlighted. This includes the fact that the result is mainly based on averages which may not show the exact responses, especially when choices of 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' are added which then need to be averaged. Additionally, there is the problem of leading or loaded questions or questions which might have more than one interpretation, as well as other issues related to the administration of the questionnaire and the time given to participants. These are in addition very time and effort consuming for participants.

There is argument on developing questionnaires for learners, parents and other members of society including the employers to get their perception about what is covered and what can be covered based on their own practice. The questionnaires can be developed according to their own needs and interests.



To analyse what teachers and learners do with the curriculum, observation seems to be one of the better methods of gathering information in an evaluation. These observations need to be regularly done and need to be planned well so that it will not affect the normal teaching process (Richards, 2001, p. 303). As with interviews, observations can be structured or unstructured. In unstructured observation, the observer intends to pick up features of the teaching and learning process while observing. However, the structured observation focuses on certain elements usually by using a checklist, so the observer uses the checklist to identify how much each element is observed.

The checklist needs to be manageable as it would be very difficult and unrealistic to work with a long checklist. Therefore a focused observation with a manageable checklist is required which might lead to reliable and valid findings (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 131).

Nation and Macalister (p. 132) also cited some advantages and disadvantages of having checklists. The main advantages are that it should cover what it is intended to cover, allow comparisons between different lessons, learners and teachers and show a basis for course improvement. This works better as part of formative evaluation.

Trainee teachers need to observe and to be observed is essential as part of the training programmes. The ability to observe, note and analyse learners during teaching are key skills needed for a teacher. On the other hand, accepting others to observe them doing their work naturally is also an important factor to get the right picture of the teaching learning process and find ways to support both teachers and learners.

Test scores can give a part measurement of a course's effectiveness and may give an idea of a Curriculum Evaluation but there is a need for more analysis of information gathered

before decision making on the curriculum as there might be an a result of other factors such as the methods used for teaching and assessing learners. Tests can be at the end or during the course. These can also be local, within the course or international such as TOEFL or IELTS (McGrath, 2002; Richards, 2001, p. 302).

Using exam data based over a period of time, and analysing each element's results can feed into the Curriculum Evaluation process and might help to understand the English Language Teaching and what can be done. This can help to observe learners weaknesses skills and highlight this when it comes to developing the course book.

Teachers' diaries and journals can give a picture of teachers' thoughts and an insight into the curriculum. They should be on-going and highlight teachers' experience and impressions of the course at different stages. Learners' feedback can also be used for the Curriculum Evaluation. However, it seems that it is not easy to analyze these feelings and figure-out findings (Richards, 2001, p. 301).

In this case there is a need to expose teachers to a rich reading selection, to encourage them to engage in classroom research and to keep their own reflective journal, in which they can record their perspectives and feelings (Al-Jardani, 2006 &, 2012a).

Developing a culture of writing and keeping dairies and journals among teachers and learners is needed. In both pre and in service training programmes, teachers should be pushed to keep notes and develop this as a habit. The supervision department within the Oman Ministry of Education encourage teachers to write their notes in the lesson preparation book. Along with their lesson plan, there is a space for them to write their reflection and perception about the lesson and the materials covered. This can be a good

input into the evaluation process, but a need to develop a good record keeping system is vital.

Teacher and school records of detailed descriptions of each course, including learners' attendance, test results, lessons and materials covered, can be good data to use for evaluation. However, some of this data may not be relevant to the evaluation as they pertain only to teachers or school principals (Richards, 2001, p. 301).

Students' feedback about the curriculum or a specific course can be feedback from the curriculum users, that is from the learners themselves (McGrath, 2002, p. 14) through keeping diaries, doing self-assessment tasks or even through conducting meetings or conferences with them. A problem of using this method is that the learner may not be aware of the course objectives and what it intends to achieve. Other issues as Richards (2001, p. 302) states are that student feedback requires much cooperation from students and is time consuming.

Learners can provide written or oral feedback about their perceptions of the course, and what they found easy or difficult. In some cases they are asked to comment on the teacher's approach, which is not easy for them. However, students can provide their comments on the content of the course, although this input is always subjective and impressionistic (Richards, 2001, p. 302).

The use of self-assessment tasks at the end of each unit in most grades can be beneficial too. In these tasks, learners show their perceptions about the tasks they covered within each unit. They intend to evaluate themselves whether they have covered the target objectives of the unit, specify what they have learned, and how they feel about the whole unit (Al-

Jardani, 2002). This can be used as a basis for learner discussion using interviewing and conferencing them to feed in to the evaluation too.

Another method of gathering data is by using a case study, which is time consuming too. The teachers focus on a course or a part of it and document how they dealt with it. This helps to provide detailed information about different issues (Richards, 2001, p. 302). An example of a case study about self-assessment is based on a case study presented in Al-Jardani (2002). Such case studies can help participants reflect upon their understanding and observation of actual classroom experiences and also help to provide usable findings.

Recording lessons or part of them, as well as meetings and conferences, can be a useful method of data collection. This can be a rich source of information and can cover issues which might be difficult to put down in writing (Richards, 2001, p. 302). However, the recording should be set and planned well.

Action research conducted by a teacher in his/her class with learners can also be a tool for Curriculum Evaluation. Action research is defined as exploring a problem with the aim of finding a solution (Creswell, 2008). Tomlinson (2001) states that the idea of encouraging teachers to do action research about materials (Edge & Richards 1993; Jolly & Bolitho 1998) helps to develop some instruments to be used in pre-use, while-use and post-use evaluation. This can be useful for the teacher and the data collection stage.

The training department established a course every year for teachers supporting them to do action research, conducting and then writing about them. The Ministry has already published a number of publications based on these practical researches. This will feed and help other teachers with similar issues and also the Curriculum Evaluation process in which these can be used and their results can be examined.

### **2.2.7 The Result of Evaluation**

The evaluation starts with the preparatory stage and needs analysis, then specifies its purpose and involves the right evaluators and participants. This is followed by specifying the right dimension or a number of them, and by choosing the appropriate methods of data collection and analyzing the collected data. These results need to be presented. Some of these results need to be treated confidentially, especially the names of participants. Such ethical issues need to be considered and treated positively. There is no harm in saying, for example, that teachers commented on the curriculum design and to do so without specifying the names of these teachers as teachers' names will not add anything to the results.

The results of evaluation might affect the curriculum, the teaching environment and may help with the professional development of teachers (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 134). It might also help teachers to develop a sense of-ownership.

Curriculum Evaluation results also need to be publicized. Some of these evaluations end up as written reports. In some cases there are a number of reports which target different audiences. Usually there is a report for the public which shows the general issues arising from the evaluation. Nation and Macalister (2010, p. 134) add that an oral report should be made along with a written one. This is to make sure that the written report is explained and to highlight some issues which cannot be covered in the written report.

There is a need for these reports to sum up the main issues and show implications and ways to improve things. However, there is also a need for a follow-up stage to evaluate the evaluation and to follow-up the possibility for the evaluation's recommendations. Moreover, these evaluations and the data collected need to be stored in a systematic way

through the development of an efficient system of record keeping of data and also through noting the different types of evaluation conducted and their rationale.

The Curriculum Evaluation department produces a written report focusing on one grade each year due to the shortage of manpower, but there is an oral report or public discussion between different departments regarding this. One other aspect is that the department will end its role at this stage, as there is no follow up work whether for example the English section has done the suggested changes to the evaluated grade or not. A need for both follow up stage as well as systematic approach of evaluation is essential.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies**

This section covers the theoretical framework of the topic of curriculum evaluation. This covers some of the theories and models of curriculum and previous studies and sample of frameworks. First a detailed description of three selected models is presented. Based on them a modified one to suite the Omani context is highlighted.

#### **2.3.1 Theories of Curriculum**

A number of theories can be observed in the literature, however there are classified in different ways. Morris & Hamm (1976, p. 299) stated that much confusion seems to be seen to what a curriculum theory is, they seem to overlap. However, Morris & Hamm (1976) added that there is no one curriculum theory which can be the best for all. This doesn't depend on the theory specification only but on what it might add to a teaching context. This seems to be clear as the teaching context and the surroundings set it. This covers students, parents, society needs which can help to choose the type of curriculum theory. Mednick (2006, p. 2) highlighted a number of curriculum theories; curriculum as a product, a process, and a practice and a context.

The Product Curriculum covers a set of skills and knowledge. This theory leads to acquiring these skills which are seen as a product of the curriculum. The theory stated that by covering certain needed skills and knowledge, students can be successful. This study utilized the product theory as the main interest of it is to product a product of English Language Curriculum Evaluation Framework. Figure 2.1 highlights a diagram which shows the product theory the study is based on.

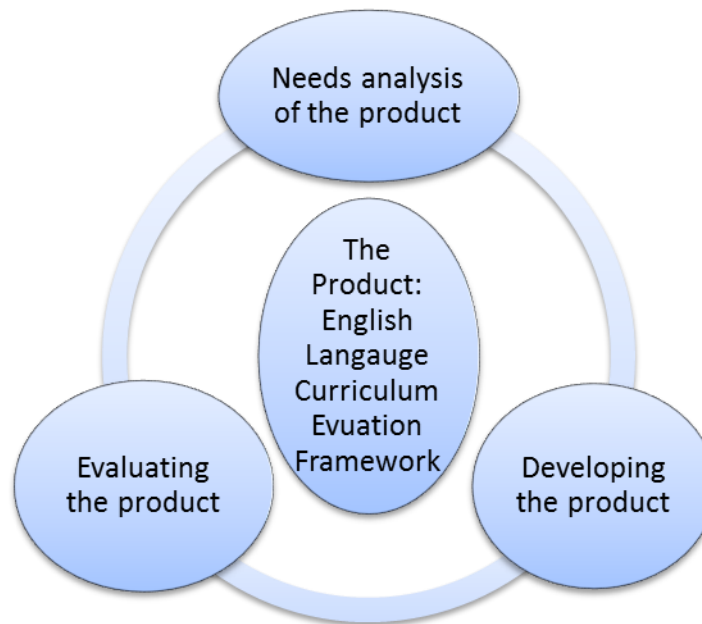


Figure 2.1: Product Theory

On the other hand, neglecting how the information is delivered is to what the theory is missing. (Morris & Hamm, 1976, p. 299; Mednick, 2006). This issue was covered in the second theory 'Curriculum as Process' where the focus is mainly on the process. The second theory is the 'Process curriculum'. This shows a clear shift from mainly focusing on teaching to learning. By considering the notion of the learning process, this then could be seen as a good step towards better education (Mednick, 2006). However, as the curriculum is more than a process, a next theory was created focusing on the practice side of teaching/learning process.

The way a lesson can be done is the main concern in this theory 'Curriculum as Practice'. This highlighted the methods used for both individual and group work to help students understand and put things in practice as well as the meaning. However, Mednick (2006, p. 3) stated the importance of values which are not tackled with this theory. The importance of developing a set of human values and developing positive attitudes within this fast developing world is a key aspect in developing a curriculum.

Based on this, a curriculum as context theory raised. It focuses on the social context and the students' needs when dealing with people outside the classroom and home country. There are a number of elements which Mednick, 2006 highlighted regarding this theory. These include the nature of the relationship between the teacher and the student and the organisation of a classroom as an example. This is what Oman's curriculum development is considering. This is clear in the objectives of the education system. For example, reinforce young Omanis' strong and proud belief in Islamic principles and behaviour, as well as pride in their country, their Gulf heritage, and the Arab world; value the diversity of the world's peoples; understand and actively promote equity, justice, peace, and the protection of the environment in their community, Oman, and the world; and other related objectives. They intend to cover the product, process of learning, teaching practice and the Omani and the global context. (Directorate General of Curriculum Development, 2011, p. 2).

For Brady (1995). curriculum is a statement of the objectives, content, method, and assessment for any teacher developing a curriculum. For this a combined of the four theories is needed. Apart of highlighting a number of theories, a number of models of curriculum are also described.



### **2.3.2 Models of Curriculum**

There are a number of curriculum models found in the existing literature. It is argued that a range of them may provide a useful structure of evaluation (Woods, 1988). This study will highlight only three of them. There are the 'Means and Ends' known as the 'Taba-Tyler', the 'Stenhouse Process' model, and the 'Skilbeck Situational' Model.

The 'Taba-Tyler' model starts with specifying clear goals for a task right from the start. Within this model there are many arguments regarding the formation of goals and objectives and the pre-specification of the outcome of activities (White, 1988, p. 26). Focusing mainly on good formation of the goals can make a good start. However, there is also a need to focus on the process. For the Omani curriculum and also for others, there is a need to set good and clear statements of goals and outcomes which need to be put in to a complete framework. However, there is also a need to state the process of teaching and learning and the content of the curriculum.

The 'Stenhouse Process' model highlights the steps followed in developing a curriculum, focusing on the notion of the target language learning. In this model, the product and how it looks-is neglected (White, 1988, p. 26) and the main focus is on the process only. For this model the focus is on the process and the steps needed for curriculum development, this needs to be considered when developing the framework. However, specifying the outcomes is also important for all parties involved in the learning process.

The third one is the 'Situational' model (Skibeck, 1984 in White, 1988, p. 36) as proposed by Skibeck, follows the stages shown in Figure 2.2:

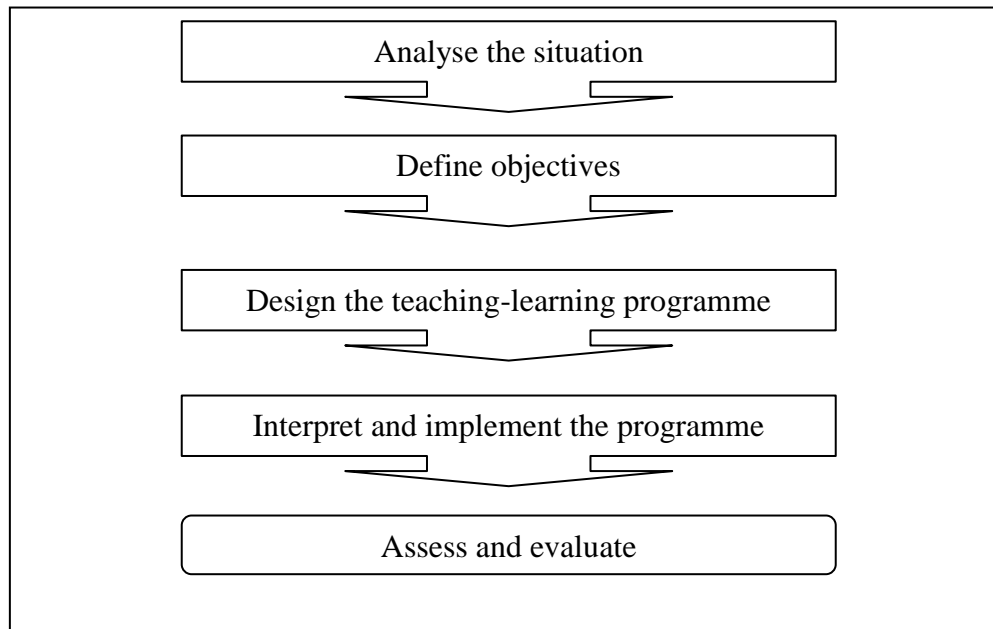


Figure 2.2: The Skilbeck Situational Model from Skilbeck (1984)

The Situational Model covers both of the previous models as it focuses on both the process and the objectives. It covers the need to understand the situation a curriculum is developed for, defines the objectives based on it and, based on these objectives, designs the programme. However, there is a need for a link between the final stage in the model - the "assess and evaluate stage" – and the first stage of the model or to the third stage, as to what is noticed from the Curriculum Evaluation reports. A clear link between all stages is important as it will help to activate and develop all components within the curriculum. This seems to be a chance to develop this model mainly to make use of the reports the curriculum evaluation in Oman is working on at the end of any evaluation context.

The reports produced by the curriculum evaluation at the end of every grade's evaluation. These intend to evaluate courses and then provide feedback which is sent in the form of a report to all other departments. The reports cover objectives, content, activities, language aspects, and the teacher's book. However, by analysing them, it seems that they never touch the objectives stage (an example see Appendix B) and they deal with the objectives as

something which cannot be changed, so they based their evaluation on them. An adopted model, shows the current Curriculum Evaluation context in Oman, is given in Figure 2.3.

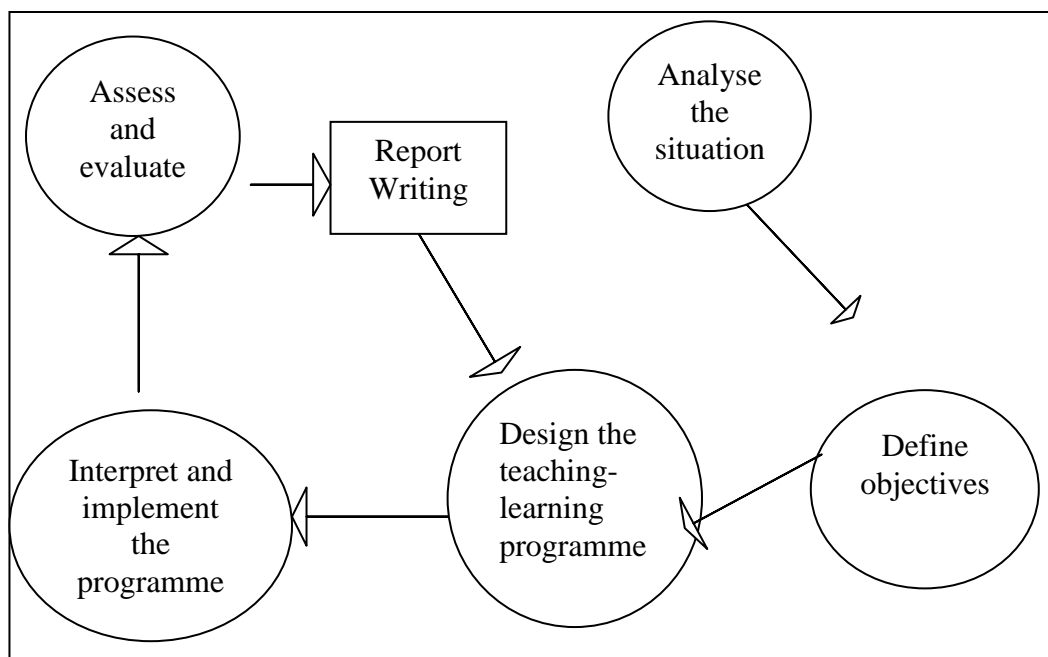


Figure 2.3: An adopted Curriculum Model

As the objectives are stated by a higher committee from the Ministry of Education in Oman, a need to revise the objectives regularly is also important. The Department of Curriculum Evaluation at this stage only evaluates the coursebooks and writes reports (a sample of a report is attached, see Appendix B: An example of an Evaluation Report) which are sent to different departments in order to be considered when re-writing the materials without considering the evaluation or re-definition of the objectives. Based on this, a need for a new model of curriculum for the Omani context where the department of Curriculum Evaluation get the right not only to suggest changes and improvements to the materials only, but also on re-defining the teaching/learning situation and re-forming the objectives and the main goals if needed. A new curriculum model can be as the following:

The need to develop oral and written reports is also essential. The report need to feed into the whole process including the situation and context defining, objectives resetting as well as the evaluation task itself. This can also be utilized with the proposed framework as the result of this study.

In the following section, more details are given about different studies and work down for both Curriculum Evaluation and developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation.

### **2.3.3 Studies/Aspects on Curriculum Evaluation**

Below are some issues which need to be taken into account when doing an evaluation. This includes the subjective nature of some of the methods and participants. For example, in some evaluations it might be said that course books with tests are better than others, for example in Tomlinson (2001), and higher scores are given to course books which include tests within the course book. Another main issue is that evaluators have holistic views which are usually impressionistic and judgmental and with no evidence to support them. This is mainly based on general feeling and impressions about the coursebook. These views are sometimes not organized or formalized. These issues need to be considered when collecting information and drawing conclusions.

Planning of the evaluation needs to be clear and should cover all levels of work: the conducting of the planning stage, data collection; analysis of the final stage of implications; and then evaluating the evaluation. The limitations of the participants, methods and surroundings need to be considered too. A good plan of evaluation and a good record keeping system are also needed; this will be highlighted in the following section.

The need to establish a record-keeping system is vital. In most organizations and at different stages of evaluation it seems that the information collected is not organised. The information tends to be subjective, random and unfocused, is mainly a result of unplanned data collection and of not having a clear system of who, when and how of collecting the information.

The more documents available, the easier it is to reach a decision about the curriculum (Richards, 2001). The documents might include-course statistics such as how many learners have joined the course, if it is an elective course, the course book, the course work such as tests, and samples of learners' work. Other documents could be written comments about the course, and also course reviews by previous teachers of the course. Other documents can be students' self-assessment tasks which can be used too. For example, in grade 5, students are asked to read few statements of what is being covered at the end of the unit and state whether they have achieved them or not. Another task is that learners need to look back to the unit and write down the main things they have learned, and what they suggest to be learned.

Some of the data collected by teachers in a school is usually followed by a meeting with other teachers or with a school coordinator to combine the information and form a complete set of evaluation information. The observations and the sheets used need to be planned too. In general, all data collected within the evaluation process, or even in regular teaching, need to be recorded and saved for any future evaluation. Combining the information will not be enough to reach satisfactory conclusions. A clear plan or guidelines - not easy to find in the existing literature - is also essential. This will be discussed next.

There is no single set of criteria to be commonly used for Curriculum Evaluation (Nunan, 1991; Johnson & Johnson 1998 in Tomlinson, 2001) highlighted that evaluating commercial materials is not an easy thing. However the existing literature shows some guidelines which might help planners to develop a systematic approach of evaluation which is also supported by Nunan (1991) that there is a need to develop a systematic Curriculum Evaluation procedure.

There are different suggestions for guidelines for adapting and evaluating a course book. The analyst may start by defining the local context, by identifying learners' needs and linking them to the aims of the programme, by describing the task or the course, collecting information, analysing it, and by finally making recommendations and suggestions (Cunningsworth, 1995; Mariani, 1983).

Different writers have developed guidelines for Curriculum Evaluation, but without developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation or even systematic ways of record keeping. The lack of framework might have a result of not having a clear record keeping system of Curriculum Evaluation. This supports the need for the framework.

#### **2.3.4 Aspects on developing A Framework for Curriculum Evaluation**

It is not easy to find common guidelines for Curriculum Evaluation; and it is difficult to find a suggested framework for Curriculum Evaluation. This could be only found as a section in the frameworks for general curricula. However, for my context and some other places where Curriculum Evaluation is treated as a dependent department, a need for separate Curriculum Evaluation is essential.

As Marsh (2004, p. 19) defined it, curriculum framework is a group of related subjects put together in certain criteria to cover a specific area of study, a framework for Curriculum Evaluation can be more related to it. A framework for Curriculum Evaluation can be a set of guidelines for needs analysis, aims, focuses, purposes, types, methods, etc. of Curriculum Evaluation which can be used in a certain context in order to evaluate the effectiveness of a curriculum with the purpose of developing, changing or keeping the existing materials. This can also include the contributions of all departments including curriculum, Curriculum Evaluation, other Ministry departments, teachers, and society at large.

In the existing literature only some examples of curriculum framework have been observed. These normally consist of a rationale or platform, scope and sequence, aims, goals and purpose of subjects, guidelines for course design, teaching and learning principles, guidelines for evaluation of subjects, criteria for accreditation and certification of subjects and future developments for the area (Marsh, 2004, p. 21). Therefore, it has been noted that Curriculum Evaluation is only one factor in these frameworks. However, some of these elements can also be included in the Curriculum Evaluation framework such as rationale of the framework, scope and sequence of the curriculum, aims, and goals, purposes of each subject and future development of the area of Curriculum Evaluation. Other things which can be added are a vision and mission of the Curriculum Evaluation task and guidelines of Curriculum Evaluation theory and practices.

Some of the key issues when developing a framework are that a clear link needs to be developed between theory and practice, to make it easy to try things out. Another consideration is that the content needs to be up-to-date and contain relevant information about the area. In general it should include pedagogy, learning and resources (Marsh, 2004,

p. 19) as this all helps to enrich teachers and other people who are interested in knowing about Curriculum Evaluation in the particular context.

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages which using a framework might have.

Marsh (2004, p. 22) stated some of-the advantages.

- The curriculum will be more coherent and orderly.
- High-quality curriculum development is likely to occur because planning criteria and standards are applied consistently across all curriculum frameworks.
- New content and skills can be easily accommodated in curriculum framework including various multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary variations
- Curriculum frameworks developed at a national level have the potential to become accepted as national frameworks
- Better chances to add up some extra activities such problem-solving, higher-order thinking skills and others.

Here he (p. 23) also suggests some disadvantages of using curriculum frameworks:

- If they are too detailed they become very directive for teachers.
- They can become instruments of compliance used as a mean of control by central education authorities without considering differences of context.

This shows that developing and using frameworks have more advantages and it is very easy to overcome the disadvantages. This can be done by developing a simple and to-the-point document which should be developed to guide and support different participants.



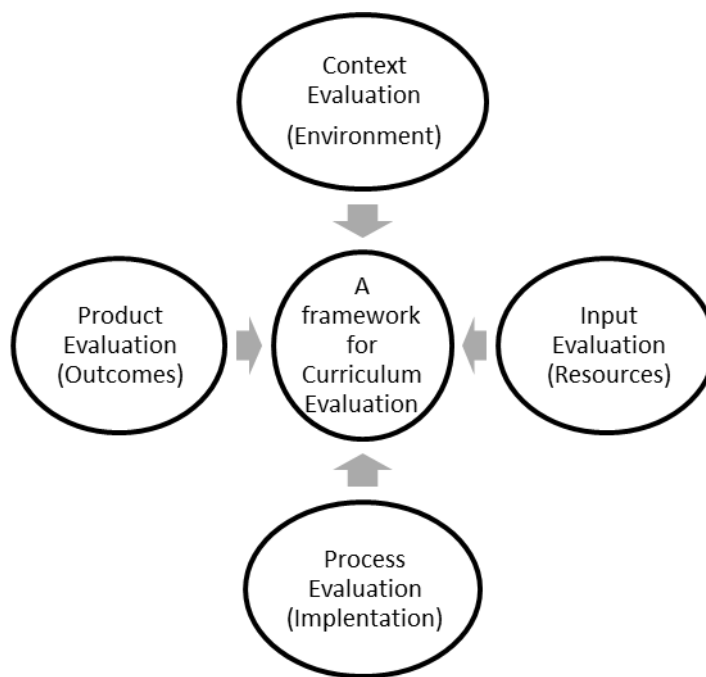


Figure 2.4: Aspects can be considered in a framework for Curriculum Evaluation.

Figure 2.4 highlights the need to cover all aspects of evaluation within the framework. This includes the context and surroundings needs, what learners are exposed to, the process of learning and what they have gained at the end of the learning/teaching process. As little attention is given to developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation, the need to understand the complexity of education is essential. This needs to cover school, curriculum, teacher training, curriculum development and evaluation and other areas of education. A great deal of work has been done in the fields of higher education, health and business in this matter. This is clearly observed while searching into the net. Many studies can be identified in these fields; most of these are on Tertiary Education.

There are a number of models of quality in education in the existing literature. This study will only focus on three of them, including the Quality Control Model, Quality Assurance Model and Over Training Quality model (Cheong & Ming, 1997).

The Quality Control Model is mainly used in the final stage of a project. It focuses on examinations (Loc, N). This seems to be the oldest model of this kind, as people now tend to look at all stages of any project and wait for it to finish before evaluating it. For this study, a need to ensure the quality is required for all stages of the curriculum evaluation.

The second model highlighted here, the Quality Assurance Model, seems to be different in that it can be used in the second stage of quality assurance—as it focuses on the process of the programme (Loc, N.). However, again the proposed framework intends to cover the entire product itself apart from the process which is also important.

The Over Training Quality model (TQM model) goes beyond quality assurance (Loc, N.). It is based on creating a quality culture. Sallis (1993, p. 119-120 in AL-Nabhani, 2007) argued that an educational organization could benefit from applying the TQM approach both in human and financial terms. It focuses on the input, the process, and the product or the output. At school level, this can be by observing the input of the teaching and learning process including how teachers and students perform, the input of the curriculum and other factors. The process may include the teaching plan and observation of any kind, and the output can be the level and the results of the product, in the Curriculum Evaluation, and this can be what students can do with their language skills outside the classroom. Therefore, a need to utilize this specific model is important for this proposed framework.

### **2.3.5 Studies and projects on developing A Framework for Curriculum Evaluation**

A number of studies could be found in the literature to develop frameworks for different countries and organisations. These are specially written for different context. This stresses the need for developing a new one for the Omani context. The following are some selected

ones which seem to give a picture of the exciting type of frameworks and what issues covered in them.

The project developed by the European Council for Culture Co-operation ends by producing a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council for Cultural Co-operation, 2001, p. 7). This framework has been stated within these three main criteria: comprehensive, transparent and coherent. These are key aspects for any work developed. It is comprehensive as it covers all possible use of language in different situations, and usages including linguistic, social and others. It is also transparent as it is stated clearly and is available for all. Finally it is coherent as it is presented in a reasonable sequence based on each component's relation to the other.

The Common European Framework covers the following components:

- The identification of needs
- The determination of objectives
- The definition of content
- The selection or creation of materials
- The establishment of teaching/learning programmes,
- The teaching and learning methods employed,
- Evaluation, testing and assessment

Another example is the framework developed by the Government of Western Australia, (Curriculum Council, 2012). This Curriculum Framework sets out the "knowledge, understandings, skills, values and attitudes" which students are expected to gain. Their framework covers present and future conditions such as culture and family change and

other changes in the workplace, technology and others. The framework also covers different values planned and the learning outcomes. This helps to guide curriculum development and evaluation as a fundamental basis for the curriculum. This seems to be needed for the Omani context too.

Other examples of Curriculum frameworks also help to provide guidance for implementing the standards adopted by the State Board of Education such as in Pennsylvania and California in the US. (Department of Education- Pennsylvania, 2012 and Department of Education- California, 2012). Looking in depth into the California framework, the standards are divided into different categories including career technical education, foreign language, health, history-social science, mathematics, physical education, reading/language arts, science and visual and performing arts frameworks. This seems to cover all areas with the general curriculum in the state. In the Omani context, these areas are covered within the all subjects developed within the entire curriculum. However, as the main issue within this study is only the English language framework, it should cover the four skills and set standards for them covering other language aspects.

A workshop in September 2011 was conducted under the title ' International Workshop on Curriculum Evaluation in the Gulf States. This workshop highlighted a number of issues related to curriculum Evaluation in Gulf countries including developing a framework for curriculum evaluation and explored follow- up strategies to utilize it in different Gulf countries. This valuable step towards highlighting the need for such framework is a key aspect; however, developing it for real is even more important. This study seems to be in the right track toward a better understanding of curriculum evaluation concepts within the countries of the Gulf.

Another project which can be highlighted is the Alaska Curriculum Evaluation Framework projects (Department of Education & Early Development, 2012). This results of covering the areas of Arts, Health, English & Language Arts, Math & Science, Social Studies, and World Languages. This seems to cover all different subjects similar to other frameworks discussed earlier. However, the framework contains a number of elements: definition of curriculum, content, instruction, assessment, context, pre-service education and professional development, learning partners, equity, school to work, early childhood education, technology, and native ways of knowing and the curriculum. Some of these elements can be easily developed for different frameworks such as descriptions of the content, teaching and instruction design, assessment procedure and technology use, but some of these are mainly related to the Alaska context such as school to work one.

From these studies, the need for developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation for different ELT contexts including for Oman is highlighted. Therefore, a need for this study is essential. The need is still required by the users of the framework; in the Oman case there are the curriculum officers who should have a role in the research. They can be useful in the stage of needs analysis and the evaluation stage too. The need for experience which can be the knowledge of the Curriculum Evaluation and the Omani ELT context is important to develop the framework. A good suggestion for this is looking for some Curriculum Evaluation from an Omani perspective. They can improve the right selection for the time when developing the framework. The need for a stage for evaluating the framework is as essential as a final one. Curriculum Officers should be part of this along with some more samples. These samples need to be close to the classroom which can be the supervisors and other who are close to the policy maker. Those closest to curriculum development in Oman can be officers from the undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning Office.

## **2.4 Summary**

This chapter highlighted both the conceptual and theoretical framework of the topic studied. In the curriculum section, a definition of curriculum was presented, followed by the role of curriculum in the teaching and learning context. The section ended by highlighting the need for published materials and what each party involved in the learning context needs them for.

The main section examined Curriculum Evaluation. It stated what Curriculum Evaluation is, its different purposes and different audiences, such as teachers and learners. This was followed by presenting how different authors categorized evaluations (dimensions of evaluation) such as macro-micro, pre-use, in-use and post use evaluation, ending with quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Developing an interaction among dimensions was also discussed, followed by highlighting different methods of gathering the information for Curriculum Evaluation, including interviews, questionnaires and others. We have also looked at handling the result of evaluation and the need for a systematic approach to evaluation through thorough record keeping and clear evaluation guidelines developed in the literature. This section ended by highlighting what a framework for Curriculum Evaluation is and what it covers.

The Literature Review chapter ended with a section about the framework for Curriculum Evaluation. It highlighted issues related to what this means and what it usually consists of. The chapter ended with the need for a framework for Curriculum Evaluation based on clear elements.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter aims to highlight the research methods and data collection methods used within this research. It utilized a development research approach in which a Delphi method is used. The use of interviews and questionnaires in different phases of the study will be clearly shown within the chapter.

The chapter will cover the use of developmental research, highlighting its general aims, rationale and different types. It also describes the type of data collected which are both quantitative and qualitative. The chapter also covers descriptions of the participants and criteria for choosing them, the research procedure, the data collection methods and finally the way the data is analysed.

#### **3.1 Developmental Research**

There are three phases developed within the research. Firstly needs analysis is required to ensure that the curriculum officers agree with this need, in order to be positively involved in this research. Then, work on developing the framework with the support of some experts to make it on its best look. Finally, there is a need to test it within the people who are mostly using it in the Ministry's offices and who are close with the practitioners in the field. Based on this, this study will reflect a scientific perspective on research and use of Developmental Research. The Developmental Research process is normally cyclical or spiral: "analysis, design, evaluation and revision activities are iterated until a satisfying balance between ideals and realization has been achieved" (Akker, 1999, p. 7). This seems to be the most suitable research approach for such study. It also involves using the Delphi method in the second phase of the approach. The Delphi method is a method in the form of

a process involving individuals or experts in the field to work on a problem or issues using a series of data collection and analysis techniques (Linstone & Turoff, 2002; Skulmoski, et al. 2007). More details about using the developmental approach and the Delphi methods will be highlighted in this chapter. In most cases, development research is defined in relation to other terms such as instructional development, action research and formative research in the literature. Some of these are seen as similar in meaning in some cases.

Seels and Richey (1994, p. 127) in Richey and Klein (2005, p. 24) defined instructional development "which is known as developmental research" as "the systematic study of designing, developing and evaluating instructional programs, processes and products that must meet the criteria of internal consistency and effectiveness". Developing criteria or standards for a curriculum helps to set clear issues for Curriculum Evaluation and to examine whether these standards were met or not. Reeves and Oliver (2004) see that such research involves intensive partnership between researchers and practitioners of each field investigated.

On the other hand, developmental research is referred to in relation to other terms such as action research and formative research (Akker, 1999). However, these two terms are more known as related to different aspects of education. As action research is more related to the area of teacher education and formative evaluation is mainly concerned with the area of curriculum and instructional development. Understandably, people tend to confuse these with developmental research (Akker, 1999).

In this case, one should to add that development research is observed in the following areas in education as Akker, (1999, p. 3-5) states. These areas include curriculum, media and technology, learning and instruction, teacher education and didactics. In general, this type of research is intended for work on programme or product development. This is what this study intends to produce and examine: a framework for Curriculum Evaluation. This shows



that the focus will be on the area of curriculum as part of education and English language teaching.

The general aim of Developmental Research is to reduce doubt in decision-making in developing educational interventions (Akker, 1999) which might lead to educational reform. Developmental research (Akker, 1999) has two specific goals. One is to develop ideas for improving the quality of a reform or to create such a reform. The other goal is to test new or developed design principles based on the suggested intervention. This is in line with what this study intends to achieve, which is to develop a framework for Curriculum Evaluation and then to examine it within the target context.

Akker, (1999) added an additional goal for developmental research, which is to encourage the professional development of participants as they are trying out new things which might lead them to a better understanding of their workplace. Involving participants within the context gives them the chance to understand their role using new interventions and then try out these changes in practice. In this study, the participants including the curriculum and the English Language Curriculum Evaluation Officers are involved in identifying the need for the framework and then in examining it in the final stages. Other participants in phase 3 which are the English supervisors and officers from the undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning office, this can enrich their information about Curriculum Evaluation and specify their needs regarding what a Curriculum Evaluation framework can include.

### **3.1.1 The Rationale for using Developmental Research**

Developmental research, as one of the research approaches, can provide practitioners in the field with useful and usable data, focusing on the design, development, and then evaluation of instructional products and processes. This is aimed at either creating generalized conclusions or producing ones related to a specific context, which leads to a problem solving function (Richey & Klein, 2005).

There are a number of reasons for choosing developmental research for this study. This approach to research can help to find solutions and answers easily (Akker, 1999). For a designer of a product or the curriculum evaluators, clear feedback on the product is needed within a reasonable time to help them make decisions and to improve their products. It is also seen to justify the amount of time and effort given to the exercise.

Other reasons for choosing this, is that this kind of study is very complex in terms of different parties and the variety of people involved (Akker, 1999). It is basically a whole reform including many factors and contains both short and long term plans and practice which need to be dealt with in a careful way. Such context and field (education) is in need of developmental research. This is because the approach is a cyclical approach, which covers different activities and involves both backward and forward process and can cover different types of participants in its different stages.

The third reason for choosing a developmental approach for this study is that it is currently one of the most commonly used methods of research along with formative evaluation and action research (Akker, 1999) and furthermore it is the most commonly used approach for developing and examining educational reforms. One of the key issues is that it examines the theoretical issues related to the topic and also involves a designing stage, which leads to a new product.

Therefore, choosing this approach was planned and this seems to be the most suitable approach to end by developing a framework and then revising it by selected participants.

### **3.1.2 Types of Developmental Research**

There are two types of developmental research - Type 1 and Type 2 (Klein, 2005; Richey, et al. 2004 & Richey). For both types the main difference is that in Type 1 the design or the product is **not available** and in Type 2 the design is **available**.

Type 1 addresses new product design, development and evaluation. It can be within a specific situation or context or can be generalized in conclusions (Richey et al., 2004; Richey & Klein, 2005). This can result in a final product, which is developed and examined.

Type 2 addresses the development and evaluation of a given design and helps to show strengths and weaknesses of the design, the target process and the effect of using it within the target context (Richey et al., 2004; Richey & Klein, 2005).

Based on this, this study will be a Type 1 study as the design is not available and this research intends to formulate one - a framework for Curriculum Evaluation. This includes developing product design, development and evaluation phases.

Before analysing the data collection instruments, a focus on the type of data collected for the research in the sense of qualitative or quantitative data.

### **3.2 Data Collection Methods**

In the existing literature, there is a number of data collection methods used in Type 1 developmental research. Richey et al., 2004 and Richey & Klein, 2005 listed some of them: case-study, in-depth interviews, field observation, document analysis, survey and document analysis. For the purposes of this research, the researcher will select interviews for Phase 1, the Delphi methods which include interviews and questionnaires in Phase 2, and will end with questionnaires in phase 3.

#### **3.2.1 The Delphi Method**

The Delphi method, utilized in Phase 2 of the research, is a group decision making technique. It seeks to achieve an agreement among group members through a series of questionnaires and interviews in some cases (Gordon, 1994, p. 5). The questionnaire is

answered anonymously and individually by each group member, and then the answers are summarized and sent back to group members along with the next questionnaire. The process is repeated until a group agreement is reached. It is anticipated that this might take two rounds or more until agreement is reached. However, for this study a proposed three rounds are planned unless more is needed. The plan of developing the framework is mainly based on an interview with different experts. The interviews are analysed and based on a questionnaire with the suggested elements. Their details are figured out in a questionnaire with a space to add to them if necessary. The third round consists of the suggested elements and experts are expected to put them in order in the second questionnaire.

The Delphi process is seen as family techniques, including more than one method, as it does not show a clear single procedure. It uses experts in the field in a series of rounds, collecting and analysing data with confidentiality from individual participants. One of the key issues is that every member in the study will get the collection or the data analysis along with the new questionnaire. For this study, the method will start with interviewing the experts followed by 2 questionnaires.

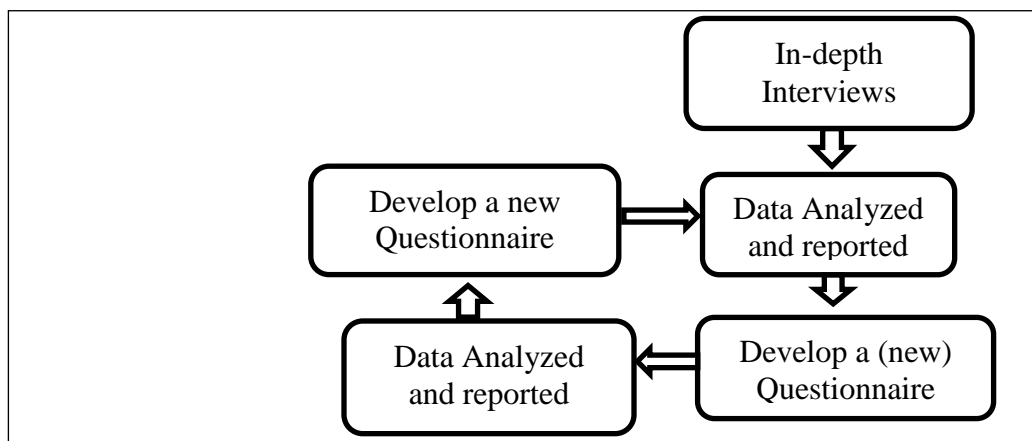


Figure 3.1: The Delphi Method

Linstone and Turoff (2002) state that these days the Delphi method consists of two types. These are: the paper and pencil/pen version, and the "Delphi conference", which is a computer-based version. Both seem to work well. However, with the computer based version, the time and effort of both the researcher and the participants will be reduced especially through use of a very structured questionnaire. However, there are also some other ways to do a Delphi study and therefore different titles are observed in the literature such as telephone calls, committee meetings, formal conferences and seminars (Linstone & Turoff, 2002, p. 5). The Delphi method is usually used when face to face meetings are impossible because of geographic distance, or when some of the members have time issues.

This study will use a computer-based version as it is not easy for the researcher and the experts to meet. However, a need for face-face interviews to discuss issues related to Curriculum Evaluation and what aspects should be covered in the framework. For questionnaires, emails as a mean of communicating with the experts is the way which can ensure a good communication with them although continuous reminders is essential to keep them in the research. Therefore, complete information on each expert who agreed to participate is needed including more than one email and contact number.

### **3.2.2 Interviews**

Interviewing is a method which can be used on its own, or to support another method (Swetnam, 2004). This suggests that interviews can be more flexible than questionnaires. Interviews are used on their own in phase 1 and within the Delphi method in phase 2.

Another advantage of interviews is that the format and content of the questionnaire is fixed (Holland and Shortall, 1997; McDonough, 1997). However, in an interview, follow-up questions can be adapted in the light of responses to the previous ones. The interviewer can

also ask for clarification of answers and follow up on interesting points (Drever, 2003). The participant can also ask for clarification if he has not understood the question. This will help to get the appropriate answers to the questions asked.

On the other hand, interviews can also be more stressful for the participant than completing a questionnaire because they are usually driven by the researcher, and are very subjective and time-consuming (Drever, 2003; Holland and Shortall, 1997; Swetnam, 2004). In order to reduce this, a copy of the main questions is sent to the participants before the interview to help them be prepared and save their time during the actual interview.

Researchers intend to choose a semi-structured or guided interview because such an interview is conducted within a loose guiding framework where certain crucial topics must be covered, but the participant is allowed some freedom to express his/her views within this framework (McDonough, 1997). This will ensure covering all areas in the research but also make data analysis and comparison much easier as the interview looks at what interests the participant. This type seems the most suitable for clarifying of some points raised in the questionnaire.

This study uses semi-structured interviews in both phases 1 and 2. This encourages both officers in phase 1 and the experts in round 1 of phase 2 to express themselves of the importance of the framework and what it should include. Follow-up questions will be used to clarify their responses, guide participants to the topic and to elicit more information. For phase 1, there are 7 participants and each interview would take between 20-25 minutes including introducing the research purposes. For phase 2, there are 12 participants involved. This is expected to take longer with about 25-30 minutes each as there are more questions in the phase 2 interview.

In order to get the most out of them, the interviews are taped and transcribed for each participant. Transcribing all details will take a very long time, however the study will mainly transcribe the most important information related to the framework development.

### **3.2.3 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are probably the most commonly used data collection instrument for eliciting information about attitudes, beliefs and perceptions (Drever & Munn, 1999; Holland and Shortall, 1997 and McDonough, 1997, p. 171;). In order to ensure that the questionnaire gives valid results, the researcher uses easy and comprehensible statements within the questionnaire. Therefore, a questionnaire format is also used for this study.

There are essentially two methods for administering any questionnaire. These are called face-to-face administration, where the researcher is present while the respondent or respondents complete the questionnaire, and administration by mail, where the questionnaire is sent by post to pre-selected respondents (Holland & Shortall, 1997). For the purpose of this study, the researcher will send the questionnaire by emails. Participants are given enough time to fill out their questionnaire and email it back within an agreed time.

Good planning of the questionnaire is important. This includes forming the questions. The questions should be clear, understandable and specific. Each question should have a purpose (Burton & Bartlett, 2005) and is selected in terms of its form such as open-ended or "choose an option".

This research project employed both open-ended questions and fixed response questionnaires. Open-ended questions are composed of items which require respondents to elaborate on their attitudes, opinions, perceptions etc. (Swetnam, 2004).

Fixed response questionnaires, on the other hand, are characterised by items to which there is a fixed number of responses. In this case there are statements where the participants are expected to read and choose their preferred response.

The researcher also utilized some agreement scales, which require respondents to specify the extent of their agreement with particular propositions. For example in phase 2, round 2 the experts are expected to rank the interview's items (from agree strongly to disagree strongly), but there is a space for them beside each item to put their suggested details ending with a box underneath for their general comments. The questionnaires in phase 2 are used after the interview to work out different elements needed to be covered in the framework. However, for phase 3 with 34 participants, the questionnaire is used to find out the importance of each elements and the usefulness of the framework.

### **3.3 The Participants**

In order to specify the sample for the study a clear plan of the right sample was done. For all phases a non- random sampling was used. For example for phases 1 and 3, participants from the curriculum officers are limited, therefore it was important to use all of them is important. This can be very close to a nominating sample. A purposive sampling is used where participants are chosen according to a set criterion (Johnson, 2012). This is clearer for phase 2 as set of criteria were sent to target population of experts around the country and then a selection were made based on that.



Richey et al. (2004) and Richey and Klein (2005) note that participants in developmental research are at different levels. These might include designers, developers, evaluators, clients, instructors, organizations, design and development researchers and theorists, learners and other types of users.

The study participants are the officers who are dealing directly with the framework. However, the framework itself will affect others such as teachers, learners, parents and others. The study will use all the available Curriculum Officers in the Department of Curriculum for both Phases 1 and 3. On the other hand, for Phase 2, the study will use a purposeful sampling, whether it is "information rich" (Patton, 1990, p. 169 in Creswell, 2008) and the experts are chosen according to certain characteristics and criteria. These can come from the Ministry of Education, public and private colleges and universities. Choosing experts of the curriculum field from local organisations helps to ensure a better understanding of local culture, needs and interest. For phase 3, in addition to the Curriculum officers, selected officers from the undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning office who are closer to the policy makers and who have background in ELT as well as the English supervisors from the entire Sultanate who are closer to the field were chosen. More details about these participants will follow.

### **3.3.1 Curriculum Evaluation Officers**

There are about 9 English Language Curriculum Evaluation Officers in the curriculum Directorate. However, as two of them are on a study leave, only 7 of them participated in this study. They have between 5 and 16 years of experience in teaching, supervising and in curriculum development work. They also hold Bachelors and Masters in TESOL from various universities in Oman and overseas.

There is a need to involve all of them in both the needs analysis and evaluation phases as they are the key users of the document in the future and the ones who work directly in developing and evaluating the curriculum.

### **3.3.2 Curriculum Evaluation Experts**

Gordon (1994, p. 7) stated that most studies use panels of 15-35 people and their acceptance rate is between 35 and 75 percent. For a PhD study, Delphi is usually followed by interviews or other survey techniques to check the effectiveness of the product in the target context. This study will also follow that system as this is to be followed by a Phase 3, where Curriculum Evaluation officers, the English supervisors and members of the Undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning Office will check the use of the framework in the target context.

Apart from being specialist in curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation, selected experts should also have reasonable practical experience in dealing with Curriculum Evaluation issues and other issues including knowledge and a willingness to participate in the current research.

A careful selection of participants is essential as the experts selected affect the results and future recommendations. Evaluation should include knowledge of the issues and a willingness of the participants to cooperate. Skulmoski et al. (2007) stated some criteria for choosing the experts for the study. These include having knowledge and experience of the issues under research, available time and a willingness to participate in a multi-rounds method and effective communication skills such as computer skills. For this research the sample also need to have good knowledge of education in general and Curriculum development and evaluation in Oman in particular.

Most experts are usually very busy so the time issue is at the very core of this exercise. Therefore questions should be well written and convey a clear message to save time. For this study more than 20 experts were selected according to the characteristics from different private and public organisations related to English Language Teaching, curriculum development with a distinguished understanding of the Omani context. However, only 12 of them agreed to take part because of many tasks they are dealing with at the time of the study.

### **3.3.3 Members of the Undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning Office**

Officers in the undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning office might be closer to the policy makers especially to the curriculum development and evaluation. A selection of the officers is based on how much they are related to curriculum development as well as their learning background especially those who have ELT background who can support the research and its findings in the future. Based on this, 9 officers could be chosen and they agreed to be part of this study.

### **3.3.4 English Supervisors**

Eighteen supervisors from different regions of the Sultanate were selected to be part of this study. They usually have long teaching experiences, have worked as teachers or have been senior teachers in the same region. Although only 2 from each region were selected, the senior supervisor along with one supervisor, they are a small number but they can represent a region as they are close to all supervisors in that region, teachers and students. They are also in relation with different officers in different departments such as curriculum, supervision, learners' assessment, and training as well as with different schools administrators. In addition to that, English supervisors are also dealing with the society

around them and get comments from parents and other parties. The study intends to use all of them in phase 3.

### 3.4 Research Procedures

This study will be a Type 1 of developmental research. It is based on a natural work context, the English Language curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation departments. In this section, the research procedure will be highlighted.

For Richey and Klein (2005: 26) Type 1 may have an analysis phase, a design phase, a development phase and a try-out and evaluation phase. Based on this, this study will include 3 phases or stages. They are the needs analysis stage, the development stage and finally the revision or the evaluation stage.

Table 3.1

Phases of the study

Research Phases	Methods	Participants	Sample No.
Phase 1 (Needs Analysis)	Interview	Curriculum Evaluation Officers	7
Phase 2 (Development)	The Delphi Methods: Round 1: Interview Round 2: Questionnaire Round 3: Questionnaire	Selected Curriculum Evaluation Experts	12

Phase	3	Questionnaire	Curriculum Evaluation
(Evaluation)			Officers, Members of the undersecretary of Curriculum office and Learning Office, and English Supervisors

Table 3.1 shows different phases of the study, the methods used and the participants in each phase. The total participants in the three phases are 53.

Figure 3.2 shows the phases of the study including the document analysis stage. The document analysis stage helps to form the framework based on the experts' suggestions. More details on the phases and the document analysis stage are in the next sections

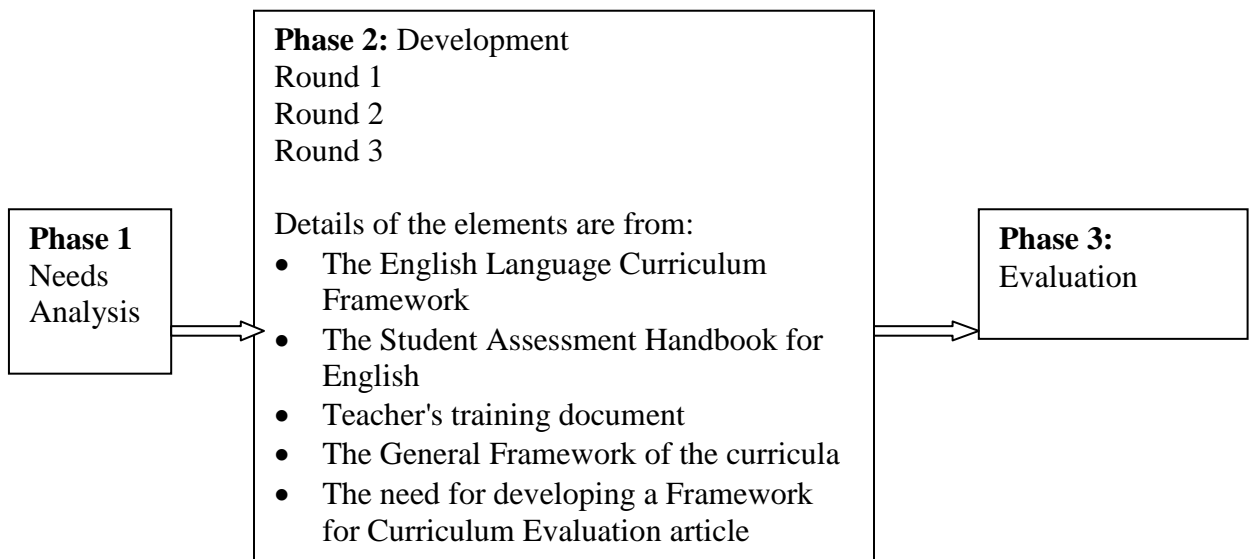


Figure 3.2: Phases of the study

### **3.4.1 Phase 1: Needs Analysis**

The needs analysis phase identifies the need for developing the framework for the area of Curriculum Evaluation. Curriculum Evaluation officers within the Ministry of Education will be necessary at this phase. This will be done by conducting interviews with them. The interview will be semi-structured and consist of a few questions to identify the need for developing a framework. However, there is a need to keep the interview open in order to collect opinions about the topic of the research.

The interview (See Appendix C: Phase 1 Data collection instrument) is structured in a way to make it easy for the participants to answer. There are 5 main questions to answer. The questions include: Do you need a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation? What do you need the Framework for? Who should write the Framework? Who should the Framework is written for? What should the Framework for Curriculum Evaluation document cover?

The main question in this interview is the first one: "Do you need a framework for Curriculum Evaluation? As this will answer the issue of the need for the framework, however, a follow up question is both cases whether agreeing or not is the word 'why?' Other questions can help to highlight other issues related to the topic and will be analysed in the findings chapter.

### **3.4.2 Phase 2: Development**

The second phase of the study is the design of the framework by using the Delphi method.

Participants in this stage will be a selection of experts in the field, as mentioned before, to set a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation. The experts will help to identify these standards, agree upon them and then rank them to get the first framework for Curriculum

Evaluation. The data collection methods used in this stage consists of interviews followed by two sets of questionnaires as part of the Delphi method, discussed in depth later.

The interview (see Appendix D: Phase 2 Data collection instruments) will be used to collect information. Based on this, the data would then be organised and put in the form of a questionnaire and sent to the participants (the experts) who are expected to check them. They can also drop or add any relevant information and standards if necessary. After analysis of questionnaire 1 qualitatively, and based on the results, questionnaire 2 will be developed and sent back to the experts. For questionnaire 2, the experts are expected to set an agreement for ranking the elements.

For Round 1, interviewing the experts should help to set the whole data collection. The question needs to get a good picture of what the framework can include. The questions cover how important it is to have a framework, who will help if we have one and the effect of its absence, its target audience and the main question is what aspects should be covered in the framework in order to answer the main research question (the interview questions in Appendix D).

In Round 2, Questionnaire 1, the experts will be given the list of items suggested by themselves during the interviews. They rank them using a scale (from agree strongly to disagree strongly using five scales). There is space for them to add items to the suggested ones, and also a space for them to add any comments regarding designing and developing the framework.

In Round 3, Questionnaire 2, the experts are expected to put the items from questionnaire 1 in order. There is space for them to write any other comments, which will be analysed qualitatively.

More details about each of these instruments are in the Data collection methods section.

### **3.4.3 Phase 3: Evaluation**

Finally, the third phase of the study is to apply the framework for Curriculum Evaluation in an Omani context. This will be done by developing a questionnaire, in two parts, which include the draft of the framework for phase 3 participants. They are the Curriculum Evaluation Officers, members of the Undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning Office and English Supervisors (see Appendix E: Phase 3 Data collection instrument). Their impact on the framework will be evaluated and based on that a new modified version of it will be produced.

Part one presents the suggested elements by the experts in phase 2. This includes appearing of the actual texts of the framework as the participant click on one of them and at the end of that element there is also another link called "Back" and by clicking on it, the participants come back to the element and choose the level of usefulness of that elements and so on with the rest of the elements. In the same part, there is a chance for participants to write any suggested changes or improvements for each element.

Part 2 includes three statements regarding the coverage of the document, the order and the usefulness for their own working context. Participants rank these with the level of agreement (Agree strongly – Disagree strongly).

There is also a box provided for any general comments and suggestion for the participants to fill if they have any.



### **3.5 Ethics**

Ethics should be considered in all stages, from choosing the topic, developing methods, choosing participants, collecting and analysing data, drawing conclusions and ending by publicizing the findings. This study will consider ethics in time of collecting, analysing and even drawing the findings of the study.

One of the main issues related to ethics which are related to data collection is respecting individuals and the organization which the study is utilizing-(Creswell, 2008, p. 179). This should be done by asking for permission and ensuring the anonymity-and confidence of participants and by protecting their identities. Showing participants the plan of the study and the role of the researcher before collecting data helps to get a normal reaction and not made-up responses and will avoid stress (Benscombe, 2002). Planning the work and informing participants will help not to affect their own plans or the organization schedule.

Based on the above, respecting all participants; the experts from different colleges and institutes, the curriculum officers, members of the Undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning Office and English Supervisors. They need to be considered in the sense of their roles and the things they are involved in. Therefore, sending emails and followed by reminders afterwards seems to be the most agreed issues among all participants. Some others suggested SMS reminders. Given the participants enough time and being patient is a key thing in such study.

### **3.6 Piloting**

The golden rule for questionnaires as suggested by Holland and Shortall (1997) and Swetnam (2004) is '*always to conduct a trial run*' before going on board with the real

research. Piloting the data collection instruments is important in order to analyse them and find out how data can be collected on practice.

Piloting the interviews and the questionnaires for all phases was useful. Piloting the questionnaire in this way – in this case by choosing similar target experts - will almost always bring to light problems with instructions, layout, wording, etc. that are unnoticed at the design stage. The researcher administers the questionnaire to 2 experts where they answer all the questions. Their feedback stresses the importance of making the sentences clearer and more subjective. The piloting participants, the experts encouraged to simplify the language of the questionnaire. The questions become simpler, more direct and appropriate to the target participant as Swetnam (2004) advises.

On the other hand, the questionnaire for phase 3 will be the curriculum officers, selected officers from the undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning office and the English supervisors for English Language Supervision Department to check the clarity of the questionnaire and the practicality of the questionnaire. The part 1 of the questionnaire (see Appendix E) was developed electronically. This allows the participants to look at each element and by clicking on the specific element; the whole text of the actual framework appears. For example, if a participants click on the Rationale element in the questionnaire, the rationale text will appear directly and then after reading it, participants can click on the button "Back" to return them again to the element and then they can choose to what extent having the element "rationale" is useful from their point of view (Useful 5- 1 Useless). This was a result of the piloting stage of the study as it is not easy or manageable to work on about 38 pages for a questionnaire based on a hard copy and the time spent on looking in and back to the document. Using an electronic version saved the time participant might have spent with the hard copy.

### **3.7 Analysing the Data**

Analysing different interviews and questionnaires might differ depending on the phase it is conducted in. Here are some issues related to analysing different data collecting methods.

#### **3.7.1 Interviews**

Silverman (2000, p. 152) gives some tips which need to be considered when analysing an interview transcript. These include identifying the answer sequence of the interviewee and gauging his or her reactions to some of the questions e.g. trying to avoid talking about their context. These issues need to be considered when conducting the interview in the different phases.

For all phases, at each data collection time, the data will be analysed by using the following stages identify responses and percentage of participants, highlight the high quality data on the main points, focus on the main data, compare participants' reactions to these main issues using the comparative method and then finally generate topics/items in the light of the research questions and areas focused on (Silverman, 2000, p. 152).

The coding of the data in qualitative data collection is essential (Campbell, et al. 2004, p. 146). This will lead to a better understanding of the data and make best use of it. Coding the interviews data will help to form comprehensible and understandable questionnaires for the expert to answer. This is followed by describing and explaining what the results mean in relation to the researcher's questions and what this study is intended to investigate (Burton & Bartlett, 2005).

The interviews with both the Curriculum Officers and experts in phases 1 and 2 will be conducted in their chosen time and in their work place. The interviews will be recorded,

after taking their permission, and transcribed afterwards. The transcribed interview will be emailed to the interviewees for confirmation.

The analysis of the interview ends with subtitles summarising the participants' responses. The interview questions will also affect the titles suggested and the usefulness of the information collected.

### **3.7.2 Questionnaires**

The three questionnaires (2 in phase 2 and 1 in phase 3) consist of both ranking questions and spaces for written words and texts.

Ranking task in questionnaire 1, ordering task in questionnaire 2 and 2 different ranking tasks in questionnaires in phase 3. These tasks will be analysed as a quantitative data by using the SPSS programme.

For questionnaire 1 and 2 in phase 2, the participants are the experts; therefore they will not be a comparison in these questionnaires.

On the other hand, for questionnaire 3 in phase 3, there are two parts. Part 1 is a ranking scale examining the usefulness of the suggested items of the framework. The second part included some statements about the framework and participants choose how far they agree with them. This will analysed using SPSS software and a comparison with be done as there are three types of participants involved in phase 3 (the Curriculum Evaluation Officers, members of the Undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning Office and English Supervisors). For all questionnaires aspects such as validity and reliability coefficient, the percentiles, median, and the mode of each item and each question will be collected and analysed.

The three questionnaires include a space for the participants to write their comments. These comments will be analysed qualitatively.

As the data collected from both interviews and some parts of the questionnaires are qualitative data, analysis is complex. The need to consider the multiple meanings that data might give, to make connection between them, and the need to look at the data from different sides or perspectives considering the interviewee's experience and subjective input provided (Campbell, et al. 2004), are all important in order to develop real conclusions.

Besides analysing data in phase 2, the framework is developed at the same time. For all phases reports attached with every new instrument in different rounds should cover the element of the framework and what was covered before. These reports can be sent along with the new instruments or separately to the participants' emails.

For all questionnaires, analysis of the number of items included in each one and the reliability and the validity of it will be highlighted first. This will then be followed by analysing other statistics including the mean, standard deviation, the interquartile analysis, median and the one-way Anova if necessary. This ends with qualitative data analysis by analysing the comments written by different participants.

The mean is the total score divided by the number of the scores (Creswell, 2008 & Lund Research 2012). It is the sum of all the scores in the data set divided by the number of scores in the data. This was used for all the three questionnaires in phases 2 and 3, as well as standard deviation and the interquartile analysis. The standard deviation is a measure of the spread of scores within a set of data and the interquartile analysis is a measure of statistical spreading, similar to the difference between the upper and lower quartiles, simply how the data is measured of how distributed your data around the mean. (Creswell, 2008,

Lund Research 2012; Statistics How To, 2012; The Wikimedia Foundation, 2012). One way Anova is only used in phase 3 as there are three types of participants. Lund Research (2012) states that one way Anova is used to find out if there are any significant differences between the means of three or more groups of participants. It makes a comparison between the means of the three groups of participants, in this case the Curriculum Officers, members of the Undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning Office and English Supervisors, and defines whether any of those means are statistically different from each other.

### **3.7.3 Validity**

In order to develop valid findings, Silverman (2000, p. 188) suggest several ways:

- The refutability principle, which is the need to use all relevant data and not jump to conclusions based on evidence that is not very supportive.
- The constant comparative method which is to find another case to try or test a temporary hypothesis
- Comprehensive data treatment which is to compare and inspect all the data collected before you can get to a position of generalizing it.
- Using appropriate tabulations which helps to revise conclusion by using figures and counting

In order to validate the data collected- validity is seen as "truth" (Silverman, 2000, p. 188) there is a need for some statistical procedures to support the findings. This might include correlating scores to other scores, finding out the frequencies of responses, calculating some data mean scores. These can help to check the data validity in order to support the conclusions.

This study will consider some of the above issues to ensure valid findings which can be generalised. The findings will only be developed after analysing all participants' responses both qualitative and quantitative. Apart from this, validity of the quantitative data will be presented by using the SPSS programme for all questionnaires in different phases when needed.

#### **3.7.4 Reliability**

It is essential that the researcher should avoid his/her personal perspectives as it might influence the research findings and applications. Therefore, a blind data analysis is needed. From this, recording the interviews and analysing the questionnaires in this research subjectively will make the research reliable. The study intends to make new copies of the questionnaires and the interview scripts for analysis without names. This will enable the researcher to focus only on the data and might get back to the ones with names only if necessary.

In general, this research intends to be of good-quality. Therefore the following issues will be considered in the analysis stage of the research in advance. The study will consider theoretical issues highlighted in the literature review, the flexibility of the methods selected, and the validity, and reliability of the findings.

#### **3.8 Summary**

The study will use the developmental research approach of which the Delphi method is part of it. The approach will start with Phase 1 in which qualitative data will be collected and analysed. The focus will be mainly on whether there is a need to develop a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation and what this document should cover. Analysing interview 1 which

will be with the Curriculum Evaluation Officers will help to develop Interview 2 but this time with the selected experts.

Phase 2 consists of 3 rounds and in all of them the audience will be the experts. Data collected from round 1 (Interview 2), including the items which the document should cover will be analysed and then put into a questionnaire for the second round of the Delphi method.

Round 2 in which the methods used is Questionnaire 1 will be used to rank, add or drop items from the document. Based on this, Questionnaire 2 will be developed for round 3. Questionnaire 3 will be used to confirm the experts' answers by ordering the items in logical order from each individual point of view. Analysing each one in order and then producing a complete document is the result of the last phase of the Delphi method.

In the final phase, the Curriculum Officers, members of the Undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning Office and English Supervisors fill in the questionnaire. This will help to reflect on their ideas about the document by analysing their responses and suggested changes and then to produce the final copy for this study.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

After highlighting the key theoretical issues related to Curriculum Evaluation and showing the curriculum context in Oman as well as discussing aspects related to the selected approach and data collection tools for the research, here details of the findings are shown. This chapter highlights the main findings of the study in general and for each phase. It shows participants main characteristics based on the interviews and the questionnaires collected, followed by the findings. This chapter ends with a summary which summarises the main findings of the study.

For each interview in both phase 1 and the first round of phase 2, findings are mainly organised and developed in the form of the questions asked to the participants. For each questionnaire in phases 2 rounds 2 and 3 and in phase 3, short tables are shown within the text. For these questionnaires, number of items included in the questionnaire, reliability and validity figures are presented first. Then show analysis of the questionnaire followed by the findings. For all tools including the interviews and the questionnaires, each one will end by the answers of the research questions discussed before.

Looking back at the introduction of the study, the general research question for this study is: What elements should be included in the Curriculum Evaluation manual (framework)? And how useful are they in an Omani context? This will be answered through answering the following questions for each phase of the study:

Phase 1: Is there a need for developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation?

Phase 2: What elements of Curriculum Evaluation should be considered for the framework for Curriculum Evaluation?

And phase 3: Are these elements suggested for the Curriculum Evaluation Framework useful for the Omani context? And what improvement could be made to the framework after using (testing) it?

In order to answer these research questions, analysis of each phase will be presented and answers of the research questions will be highlighted whenever necessary.

In the next section, phase 1 will be highlighted, as well as participants and the main findings.

#### **4.1 Phase 1: Needs Analysis**

To answer the first research question "Is there a need for developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation?" this study used semi-structured interviews in phase 1. This has encouraged the participants to express themselves regarding the importance of the framework and what it should include. Follow-up questions were used to clarify details, guide participants to the topic and to elicit more information. This phase took about 4 months for planning, conducting, transcribing and analysing the interviews. Before getting to the findings of this phase of the research, a description of the participants involved will be highlighted.

##### **4.1.1 Participants of Phase 1**

Participants in phase 1 are Curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation Officers. They represent both genders and have different qualifications and experience. They were interested in

participating in the research. Officers are holding a Bachelor or a master degree in the field of Education. They are working as curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation officers, helping in developing and evaluating the curriculum. Officers also vary in the sense of years of experience. They have from 6-19 years' experience working in the education field in general and 2-9 years working in the curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation sections. Participants worked in different educational jobs including English teachers, Senior English teachers, teacher trainers, and currently as Curriculum Officers in the Curriculum department. All officers started their career as English teachers, and then to either the supervision department or directly to the curriculum department. The experience of teaching helped to enrich the officer with enough methods and teaching strategies which can be utilized in the curriculum.

This variety of genders, degree levels and years of experience, would help to ensure rich data collection. However, there is no plan to research these variables in this research. This could be kept for future reference. Moreover, in some cases where there is a need for participants' quotation, the sample of this phase are 7 curriculum Officers (CO1-CO7) in order to use their participants' actual words along with the line number of the transcripts.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The data were analysed to clarify and answer the questions attached in Appendix C. Based on the data analysis, they were coded and classified into the following sections: a need for a framework for Curriculum Evaluation, what do you need a framework for Curriculum Evaluation for? who should write the Framework? who should it be written for? and what should the framework document cover?

#### **4.1.2 A Need for a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation**

All participants agreed that there is a need to develop a framework for Curriculum Evaluation. This includes all participants from the two departments- Curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation. This answers the first research question: Is there a need for developing a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation?

This supports the earlier indication of the researcher in the earlier part of this study. However then, there is a need for such support from the main users of kind of a framework. The intonation of the participants was clear enough to indicate their support of the idea and shows their willingness to support the researcher. This includes such as "*of course there is a need (CO0 line 00)*", "*for sure (CO0 line 00)*", "*I fully agree (CO0 line 00)*" and some other words and phrases which shows this willingness. Others argue that there is a process of developing one but it seems that it might take longer time to be public for instance what CO0 stated that "*there is one but still under revision, not published yet, maybe it can be published after sometime later (line 00)*". The issue of having incomplete document is highlighted in phase 2 when it comes to developing the actual framework.

Apart from answering the main question, there were some other sub-questions answered by the participants, which are: what do you need a framework for Curriculum Evaluation for? who should write the Framework? who should it written for? and what should the framework document cover?

#### **4.1.3 What do you need a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation for?**

Curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation officers see the framework as a reference or guide for curriculum development. CO6 sees the framework as "*as a guide to enhance the*

*Evaluation of the current curriculum in order to reach the national standards of Curriculum Development and ensure the continuous development of curriculum (Line 17-19)*" The framework is seen as a reference for most of the participants who can come back to it whenever needed. This can indicate the need to have it in order to help participants reach the national standards or objectives stated by the Ministry. On the other hand it is also expected to support continuum development of the curriculum as it might include future plans too.

In addition, it is supposed to link things related to curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation such as the curriculum objectives and its evaluation aspects, which help in developing new materials and revising the existing materials. It simply as stated by CO5 "It makes things clear when writing and developing new materials (line 18-19)" CO 3 added that "*We need it to know what exactly to tackle while developing the materials (line 15)*" By having this type of framework, this will make the curriculum and the Curriculum Evaluation clearer for all users of English in the country. This will give them a clear picture of English use and the general aims beyond teaching it.

#### **4.1.4 Who should write the Framework?**

Participants agreed that various people can write and participate in writing the framework. This can include curriculum advisers, consultants, and Omani and expatriate authors but along with Omani staff as suggested by CO4 "*make sure that Omanis are part of this, they should be there when it comes to developing things for the country (line 21)*". Including Omanis in the Omani context seems to be normal as they are the main user of it in the country, therefore including them is essential. On the other hand, involving all parties involved in the English Teaching process in the whole nation, the ones who teach and learn

as well the society and the organisations which get the final outcome. This can be in higher education in and outside the country as well as the workplace.

Others argued that anyone can undertake such a task only if they have a good experience in curriculum design and evaluation, and knowledge of the context the curriculum is written for and "*who has a good experience in curriculum design and evaluation* (CO 1, line 27-28)". CO 7 adds that "*Experienced people who have taught and build the curriculum* (line 00)" can be part of this. The need for the experience in the curriculum development is important. The one who will know what aspects of elements he/she might need while developing and even evaluating a curriculum will have a good chance to develop and produce a supportive framework which can be a useful source for the user.

#### **4.1.5 Who should it written for?**

The participants agreed that the target audience of the framework should cover all educational parties involved in developing, writing and designing materials. This might affect the elements which will be chosen in later phases of the study as this pushes towards covering a good number of ELT aspects within a framework intended to cover almost the curriculum and the Curriculum Evaluation issues.

*"Curriculum officers, Supervisors, Senior teachers and Teacher trainers* (CO 4 line 32)" should be the main audience of such a framework. However, CO 5 said that "*All educators in the Ministry of Education dealing with developing writing and designing materials*". Others participants (CO 1, 2, 4 and 7) specified the curriculum officers, supervisors, senior teachers, teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum authors and designers, parents as people who should this framework are written This highlights the main users of a kind of a framework which can be covered.

#### 4.1.6 What should the Framework document cover?

Participants highlighted a number of things to be covered within the framework. This includes *"the philosophy of curriculum development, the framework of curriculum development, the scope & the sequences of the curriculum document, curriculum evaluation, the Evaluation process"*. These elements covered by CO 1 and 7 seem to be very general issues. Other participants highlighted specific elements to be included in a framework. This covers the course objectives and outcomes including linguistic and non-linguistic objectives, the important topics covered in the materials, the assessing tools and type of questions, the evaluation of content, instructional design, organization of teacher's materials, assessment, evaluation process and rationale. On the other hand CO 2 gave more emphasis on the evaluation process mentioning *"sample instruments with clear description of when and how to use each of them, how to analyse the data, evaluation report writing, who should be involved in the evaluation process, needs analysis and a clear plan of what need to be evaluated and when (Lines 35-38)"*.

Some of the aspects suggested by some of the participants seem to be general which can be a title for the whole document such as *"the framework of curriculum development.... (CO7 line 37)"* This answer and some others cannot be a useful one to get into a clear list of the elements. However, there are some other mentioned before such as *"linguistic and non-linguistic objectives (CO5 line 41)"* can be a good basis for some of the elements for the framework. The list cover different elements related to curriculum development and evaluation. The issue of samples needed is clear in the phase 1 participants in both Curriculum Evaluation tools samples and report writing too. This highlights their essential need for the suggested aspects.

The main finding of this phase is that there is a need for developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation for the Omani context as seen by the Curriculum Officer for English Language in the Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman. This was supported by also answering some other questions related to different aspects of framework development. This also supports the need to develop the framework which will be discussed in the next section.

Other details collected during the interviews were used as a basis for developing the interview questions and the follow up questions for the experts in phase 2 which might have affected the phase 2 findings. Phase 2 findings are presented in the next section.

#### **4.2 Phase 2: Developmental Phase**

This phase intends to answer the following research question:

What elements of Curriculum Evaluation should be considered for the framework for Curriculum Evaluation?

By using the Delphi method in this phase, this seeks to achieve an agreement among the participants in this case the experts, through a series of questionnaires and interviews to answer the following research question: What elements of Curriculum Evaluation should be considered for the framework for Curriculum Evaluation? This phase started with an interview followed by only two questionnaires where agreement on the elements and their order for the framework was reached.

This phase as discussed in the Methodology chapter consists of three rounds. This phase took about 6 months for planning, conducting and analysing the interviews of round 1 and the two questionnaires in rounds 2 and 3. This will begin with highlighting the participants



of the phase followed by the findings of the three rounds and ending with the whole phase findings. However, before presenting the three rounds, a description of the phase 2 participants based on the collected information during the interview and the two questionnaires followed.

#### **4.2.1 Participants of Phase 2**

Participants in phase 2 are Curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation Experts. They represent both genders and have different qualifications and experience. Their agreement to take part in the study adds to its strength as they seem to be the most important individual in the area of Curriculum in Oman.

All experts hold a master or a PhD degree in the field of Education. This shows that they are qualified enough to do their job as curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation experts in different institutions including the Ministry of Education, colleges and universities. They have varied years of experience in the field of Education which is between 14-41 years. This range of years might help to have varied and rich input. The master degree holders are supported with a rich experience in developing and evaluation curricular as well as in the sense of the years they spend in positions of ELT in different organisations.

This variety of genders, degree levels and years of experience will help to ensure a rich data collection. However, there are no plans to research these variables in this research. This could be kept for future reference. Moreover, in some cases where there is a need for participants' quotation, the sample of this phase is 12 Curriculum Evaluation experts (EX1-EX12) in order to use the participants' actual words. Line numbers are also shown within them from the actual transcribed interviews. On the other hand and as stated before the sample used for the study was 12 participants out of about 20 invitations sent to all

expected good collection of experts in Oman. Some of them apologized as they cannot see themselves covering the stated characteristics especially the clarity of the Omani curriculum contexts. Others also mentioned their own lack of understanding of the Curriculum Evaluation area because of long time working as administrators.

Here, a detailed analysis of the three rounds and different quantitative and qualitative data collected is provided.

The three rounds will be ended by the findings of phase 2. The findings address the changing of the elements suggested in both the titles and their order as seen by the experts.

#### **4.2.2 Round 1**

This round was in a form of an interview. The interview consists of three main questions followed by some other follow up questions (see Appendix C).

The participants, the Curriculum Evaluation experts agreed on the importance of developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation and that it is the Ministry's role to develop one. "*The ministry is responsible for all aspects of education, including developing curriculum. A framework that accurately and comprehensively evaluates implementation and outcomes is a vital part of the process* (EX11 lines 3-6)". This seems to go along with the officers' point of view. The need for this seems to be vital.

Others specify the period in which a framework needs to be revised as, "*between 5 and 10 years* (EX5 line 13)". This as they say will help to identify recent needs of learners and jobs too. The period suggested between 5-10 years is also a chance for argument as what issues were considered to give exact years of trying out a framework which can cover most of the Curriculum Evaluation elements.

Another added that by having a clear evaluation, this will basically check the ministry's objectives in terms of academia are achieved. These objectives must be checks and balances in anything as important as curriculum, as *"it is developed; it is introduced, and is implemented (EX3 line 11)". As it was written-the curriculum-, learning outcomes and general goals and specific goals were written, therefore, how the ministry will know that it has achieved its objectives, that the goals set were met"* questioned by (EX 8 line 6-10). This seems to be the most direct response of participants ended with a clear question of what can tell the ministry that it is doing a good task. By having clear objectives and working toward achieving them is an important issue from the participants' point of view.

It is agreed by participants that the framework would benefit all stakeholders: policymakers, curriculum officers, teachers and students. Others (EX 2, 3, 4, 9, 10 and 12) add teacher trainers and parents to the list. This seems to cover all people involved in the task of English Language Teaching in the target context. Involving parents is also important as stated.

Obviously the people were given the responsibility for developing the curriculum, because they can then *"modify, change, alter as and when the need is perceived to change (EX00 line 19)".* This specifies only the people working directly in developing and evaluating the curriculum as seen as the main users of the framework. They are basically the ones who write the curriculum based on their understanding of the learners needs and age interest. They also consider the society needs in order to reach their expectations.

The evaluation framework needs to take into consideration the needs of all stakeholders, and should be designed to benefit all of them as well. This covers also different organisations both the academic ones such as colleges and institutes but also the workplace.

All participants see the effect of the absence of Curriculum Evaluation on the curriculum itself. Simply they say as EX4 (lines 27-30) stated that *"if there is no curriculum evaluation, then obviously the ministry will not know if they are on the right path, whether the goals /objectives set were attainable, and if not why not?"* This supports the rationale of the study as this seems to clarify the miscommunication between different parties related to the English Language teaching in the target context.

A Curriculum Evaluation document will not only help in data collection, but also check whether different schools are able to achieve set goals. This includes *"urban /rural schools boys versus girls, as there may be different results based on calibre of teachers"*(EX 1 lines 25-26), school location and other factors. These factors as suggested by an expert need to be addressed within the document. The issue of developing a curriculum or even a framework for each region which might have different needs and learners of it have different interest. Use of English in the Kuala Lumpur for example, is different in another state in both the amount of exposure and the chance to use the language in daily life. The question is how easy to cover these within a curriculum or even in a framework of Curriculum Evaluation.

To summarise one of the participants says that *"without a workable curriculum evaluation framework, it would not be possible to know directly the effects of the curriculum"*(EX5 lines 22-23). Moreover, this absence might affect even the teaching effort utilised by the teacher as for example he/she is using methods which does not suit the curriculum developed and the underlying principles of English teaching in the country.

The participants agree that the framework should evaluate every aspect of curriculum design, implementation and outcomes. This covers different levels of curriculum. That

should include the goals and objectives themselves; skills and information; material used; presentation of the material by teachers; teacher training; what students experience and their reactions; student assessment both formative and summative evaluation; and how these accord with ministry goals and policy.

Here is the main finding from phase 2, round 1:

### **4.2.3 Elements suggested for the framework for Curriculum Evaluation**

The previous findings will not be developed within the Delphi method in order to be developed within rounds 2 and 3. Therefore, the following findings which are only on the elements suggested for the framework will be utilized for the next rounds.

Participants highlighted different elements which can be part of the framework. These elements are shown in Table 4.1 - more details of the elements are in Appendix D.

Table 4.1

List of elements suggested by the experts in phase 2, round 1

Elements	No. Experts
Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education	12
Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education	12
Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education	12
Aims & Objectives (Goals)	12
Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives	12
Stakeholders' needs and expectations	10

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Learning Outcomes	10
Learning and Curriculum theories adopted- Syllabus Type	10
Language Items	10
Skills	9
Assessment	9
Resources	9
Teacher Training	9
Textbooks & Materials	9
Methods & Approaches	9
Instruction Time	8
Management & Evaluation	7
Communication between different departments (Curriculum, assessment, training, supervision, teachers, .. etc. of English Language)	3

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The participants show agreement with most of the listed items. All of them mentioned most of the items except the mission and vision and the need for a section for setting a communication between different departments dealing with English Language Teaching. The Instruction Time (EX 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11 and 12) and the Management & Evaluation element (EX 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 12) were highlighted only by a number of them as well as the communication one (EX 4, 6 and 12). The difference between participants helped to make a long list of elements which can be developed later.

However, the list was mentioned by most of the participants during the interview. In some cases they might use a different term to articulate the same thing, such as teaching materials instead of resources and educational aids. These differences in terminology might depend on personal experience and the place they work in at the moment.

The list from Table 4.1 is used as a basis for the framework in the questionnaire built for round 2. The list is used for round 2 and experts have also a chance to add to the list if necessary as there is a space to add more elements.

#### **4.2.4 Round 2**

This round consists of a questionnaire to rank the suggested elements from round 1, add to them or drop the unnecessary ones for the framework. This questionnaire and the followed ones, the section will start with an analysis of the number of items included within it, the reliability and the validity before presenting the findings of the round.

Table 4.2

Reliability coefficient and validity of Phase 2, Round 2

<b>No. of items</b>	18
<b>Reliability coefficient</b>	0.796
<b>Validity</b>	0.892

The questionnaire contains 18 items suggested by different experts during the interviews in round 1. The same experts in this round evaluate them according to the extent to which they agree with having them in the suggested framework.

The value for reliability coefficients for the questionnaire is .796 shows that it almost has a very good reliability. The validity of the questionnaire is .892 which refers to the accuracy of an assessment. This was calculated as the square root of the reliability coefficient. This shows that the questionnaire is also valid in this case. There weren't any added items to the list from the participants so the list is kept for the third round for ordering.

Table 4.3

The Mean, Median, Standard Deviation and the Interquartile range of Analysis of Phase 2, Round 2

<b>No.</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Interquartile range of Analysis</b>
<b>1</b>	Mission	4.83	5.00	0.39	0.00
<b>2</b>	Vision	4.83	5.00	0.39	0.00
<b>3</b>	Rationale	4.83	5.00	0.39	0.00
<b>4</b>	Aims	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00
<b>5</b>	Linguistic & non- linguistic	4.75	5.00	0.62	0.00
<b>6</b>	Stakeholders	4.00	4.50	1.35	1.75
<b>7</b>	Outcomes	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00
<b>8</b>	Theories	4.42	4.50	0.67	1.00
<b>9</b>	Language	4.50	5.00	1.00	0.75
<b>10</b>	Skills	4.58	5.00	0.90	0.75
<b>11</b>	Assessment	4.83	5.00	0.58	0.00
<b>12</b>	Resources	4.42	5.00	1.00	1.00



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<b>13</b>	Teacher Training	4.67	5.00	0.65	0.75
<b>14</b>	Materials	4.75	5.00	0.62	0.00
<b>15</b>	Methods	4.83	5.00	0.39	0.00
<b>16</b>	Instruction T	4.75	5.00	0.45	0.75
<b>17</b>	Management	4.75	5.00	0.45	0.75
<b>18</b>	Communication	4.50	5.00	1.00	0.75

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Using interquartile analysis shows that the responses are at higher level. Studying Table 4.3, one can notes that most of the level is zero as there is no clear difference between the responses. Therefore, more focus is given to analysing the mean as it seems to show to what extent participants agree with having the elements in the framework.

From Table 4.3, the mean and the median of each item are high and for the mean it is ranged between 4.0 and 5.0. This shows that participants are almost agree with including all the elements in the list. The most needed items are items 4 and 7, as all members of the whole sample see them as the most needed items to be included in the framework. It is also notice that half of respondents at least agreed strongly with all the items which support the discussion.

On the other hand, only one participant disagrees strongly with an element which is the stakeholders' needs and expectations element. However, this not supported by other participants, although that element is also the least mean compared to other elements.

Studying the mean and the standard deviation of each item shows the degree of agreement for each one is high. This highlights the importance of including all the suggested items from the experts' point of view. Therefore, a decision of keeping the entire list for the next round is reasonable.

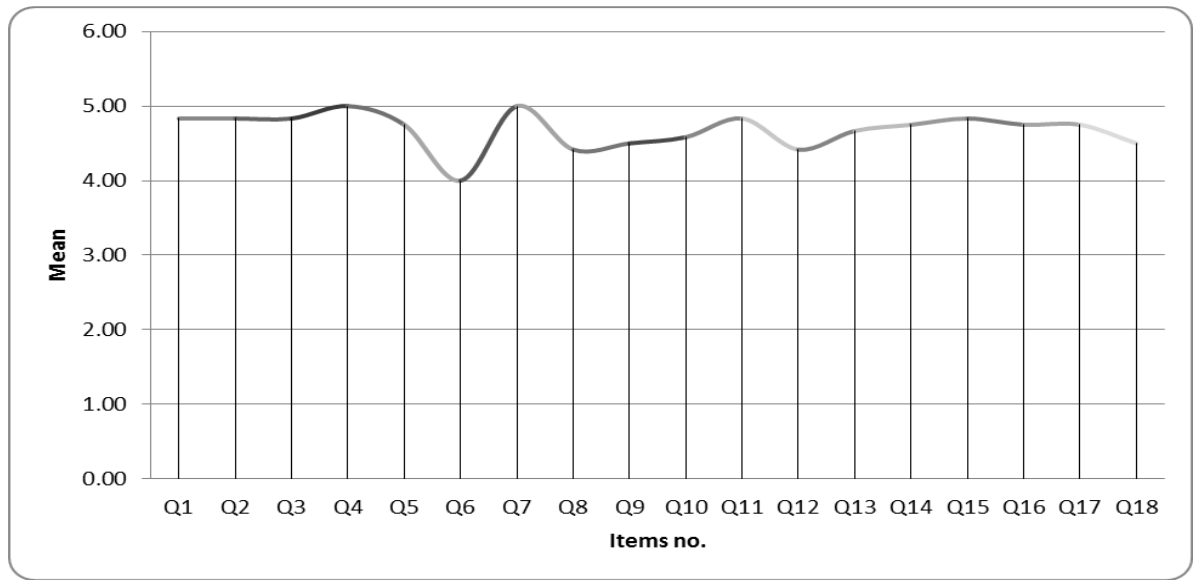


Figure 4.1: Mean of each item for the questionnaire of Phase 2, Round 2

In order to clarify more, the graph shows the high level of the mean in all of the items as discussed previously. Items 4 and 7 are the highest and 6 is lowest. However, as mentioned before, all elements got a high mean in general.

#### 4.2.4.1 Agreement on the list of elements

Round 2 of phase 2 data analysis emphasis the list produced in round 1. Participants seem to be happy with the list without adding or dropping from it during this round. The high level of agreement was noticed from the mean, median, standard deviation and the interquartile range. There is no doubt that this list will be put as it is in the questionnaire for

round 3. The coming round will make sure that all of the participants happy with the list as well as a chance to get a reasonable order of these elements.

#### **4.2.4.2 Planning the new questionnaire**

In order to plan the round 3, it seems that the order of the element task is the key issue. Therefore, the questionnaire will include all the elements and a space for the participants to put a number next to them, next to that there is a need to have a space for them to write any comment related to that specific elements when developing it later. Moreover, an empty box provided at the end of the questionnaire for any general comments regarding developing the framework in general.

#### **4.2.5 Round 3**

In this round a questionnaire is used for the experts to put the elements from round 2 in order. There is space for them to write any other comments, which are analysed qualitatively.

Table 4.4

Reliability coefficient and validity of Phase 2, Round 3

<b>No. of Items</b>	<b>Validity</b>	<b>Reliability coefficient</b>
18	0.790	.624

Similar to the previous questionnaire, the questionnaire also contains 18 items. The same experts in this round put the items or the elements in order. The reliability for the questionnaire is .624 by using Cronbach's Alpha, which shows that it also has a very good

reliability. As Validity refers to the accuracy of an assessment; it is .790. There were not any added items to the list from the participants even in this questionnaire.

Table 4.5

The Mean, Median, Standard Deviation and the Interquartile range of Analysis of Phase 2, Round 3

<b>The order based on the Mean</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Interquartile range of Analysis</b>
1	3: Rationale	3.08	3.00	2.50	2.00
2	2.Vision	3.08	2.50	2.64	1.00
3	1. Mission	3.33	2.50	2.96	1.75
4	6. Stakeholders	4.67	4.00	4.08	2.25
5	4. Aims & Objectives	4.75	5.00	1.29	2.00
6	7. Learning Outcomes	5.33	6.00	2.67	5.00
7	5. Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives	8.67	8.00	2.71	4.25
8	8. curriculum theories	8.92	8.50	2.19	2.00
9	15. Methods & Approaches	9.50	9.00	3.18	6.00
10	10. Skills & Sub-skills	9.92	11.00	3.78	5.00
11	14. Textbooks & Materials	10.00	11.00	3.28	3.50

12	9. Language Items	11.00	10.50	2.45	3.50
13	12. Resources	11.00	12.50	2.80	4.00
14	16. Instruction Time	12.83	14.50	3.76	7.25
15	11. Assessment	13.25	14.00	3.72	3.75
16	13. Teacher Training	14.00	15.00	4.09	1.00
17	17. Management & Evaluation	15.58	17.00	3.03	2.50
18	18. Communication	16.00	18.00	3.81	1.75

Using interquartile analysis shows clear differences of the participants' responses which was not clear in round 2. It mainly helps to provide a possible location of each item. On the other hand, working on the mean for each item seems to be the most useful thing for developing a reasonable order of the items. The order based on the mean seems to be more reasonable. However, for the order 1 and 2 for example and when the mean is the same, the difference in the standard deviation is used. The same thing works for elements 12 and 13.

Table 4.5 shows almost the analysis of the questionnaire. However, the researcher intends to use mainly the mean as it helps with getting a reasonable order based on the participants' responses.

A clear issue comes out of this analysis of round 3 that this seems to be the most argued point for the experts. Looking back at the mean of the round 2 questionnaire, it was clear that they were almost agreeing with the importance of the elements; however, in this case it looks like they have a different views of the order of the these elements within the proposed framework.

#### **4.2.5.1 A new order of the elements**

Based on the quantitative data analysis of the questionnaire and Table 4.5, the new order of the elements which is suggested is:

1. Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education
2. Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education
3. Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education
4. Stakeholders' needs and expectations
5. Aims & Objectives
6. Learning Outcomes
7. Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives
8. Learning and Curriculum theories adopted
9. Methods & Approaches
10. Skills & Sub-skills
11. Textbooks & Materials
12. Language Items
13. Resources
14. Instruction Time
15. Assessment
16. Teacher Training
17. Management & Evaluation
18. Communication between different departments (Curriculum, assessment, training, supervision, teachers, .. etc. of English Language)

The list is a result of the quantitative data analysed. However, there are two spaces for comments, one for each element and a space for general comments. Analysing the comments helped to shorten the list.

#### **4.2.5.2 A short list of elements**

Analysing the comments by some participants qualitatively, they feel that "*some of these elements are too similar to rank separately*" (EX 2: general comments) and EX5 says that "*... one and two in my opinion go together* (general comments)." This was supported by other participants including EX 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

The elements suggested by the experts and the also their order are as follows:

1. Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education
2. Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education:
3. Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education
4. Stakeholders' needs and expectations
5. Aims and learning objectives and outcomes:
  - a. Aims & Objectives
  - b. Learning Outcomes
  - c. Skills & Sub-skills
  - d. Language Items

This section is suggested to cover the four issues. A clear plan to cover all of these within one section is important.

6. Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives
7. Methods & Approaches

- a. Methods & Approaches
- b. Learning and Curriculum theories adopted

This section also covers the two elements within the framework.

8. Textbooks & Materials
9. Resources
10. Instruction Time
11. Assessment
12. Teacher Training
13. Management & Evaluation

On the other hand, element 18, in the previous list (communication) should go on throughout the whole process "I *feel this goes on throughout the whole process* EX 7 (communication specific comment)" and that there no need to have it separated suggested by a number of the participants. This can help in developing a short list like this which can work on for phase 3.

This answers the Phase 2 research question: What elements of Curriculum Evaluation should be considered for the framework for Curriculum Evaluation? However, a need for filling in the content for the proposed framework for phase 3, the evaluation phase. In the next section, analysis of the available documents is worked out to develop the framework.

#### **4.2.5.3 Details of the elements**

Before getting into phase 3, there is a need to analyse different documents in order to develop the first draft of the Framework for Curriculum Evaluation. In order to develop the framework, the following documents were analysed



- *The English Language Curriculum Framework* published by the English Section in the Human Sciences Department.
- *The Student Assessment Handbook for English Documents* from the Curriculum Evaluation Department related to English Language.
- *The Professional Development Plan* for 2011 published by the Teacher's training Department.
- *The General Framework of the curricula in the Sultanate of Oman*, unpublished document by Curriculum Evaluation Department.

The documents available can cover most of the items suggested for the framework. However, there is a need to analyse them and choose the content to be included in each element.

The English Language Curriculum Framework document contains elements of the curriculum. These elements are expected to be considered when planning the English curriculum.

The 'Basic Education System' section presents the general objectives of the education system which is 'the Basic Education' in Oman. The objectives cover internal and external needs of the learners and the society. This starts from the need to reinforce the Islamic principles and pride of the country, the Gulf heritage and the Arab world and ends with use English as a mean of communication.

The section, Rationale for English Language Curriculum change and development summarized the challenges facing Oman and its youth and the need to highlight and

develop learners' background of mathematics, science, technology and the languages to cope with the international challenges. These changes were summarized as the following:

The new educational philosophy adapted;

- the change of the role of English in society and the effect of tourism and international business as more and more tourists are visiting the country,
- new learners' and parents' expectations, this covers the changing needs of learners as they grown in number and become more directly linked to the whole world;
- learners' awareness in terms of knowledge of the outside world and information availability by using different technology devices;
- educational technology utilized, which are more advanced now compared to only a paper book and a blackboard in the past

These changes and other factors pushes as stated affected designing of the English Language Curriculum, teaching, teacher training, learners' assessment to cope with such changes.

The document stated two types of objectives need to be met. They are linguistic objectives and non-linguistic objectives. The linguistic objectives are those which address language learning covering vocabulary, grammar, and other linguistic skills. On the other hand the non- linguistic objectives address socio-cultural and attitudinal dimensions of learning related to culture, learning strategies, attitudes and motivation.

This part of the document -aims and objectives of the English Language Curriculum (Grades 1-12) - covers the general and specific objectives of each phase of the curriculum.

The curriculum is distributed into three parts in the thesis. There is a Basic Education, cycle

1 (Grades 1-4), Basic Education, cycle 2 (grades 5-10) and Post- Basic (Grades 11 and 12).

For each of these levels, there are certain general and specific objectives.

The section -components of the English Language Curriculum- highlights the components of the English curriculum for each level.

Cycle 1: Grades 1-4 (*English for Me*)

- Classbooks
- Skills Books
- Teacher's Books
- Big Books for Shared Reading
- Listening and Song CDs
- Resource Packs

Cycle 2: Grades 5-10 (*English for Me*)

- Classbooks
- Skills Books
- Teacher's Books
- Song CDs (Grades 5-8) Listening CDs
- Resource Packs

Post-Basic: Grades 11-12(*Engage with English*)

- Course Books
- Workbooks
- Teacher's Books

- Listening CDs
- Core Readers
- Book Boxes
- Elective Course

The document covers two complete elements of the framework and some other information related to other two items too. They are the rationale for English language development and aims and objectives of the curriculum at different levels. The document also includes the components of the curriculum as part of the textbooks and materials, and suggested websites which can be part of the resources element. This document seems a good basis for curriculum development but not evaluation as most elements related to Curriculum Evaluation are not covered in this document.

There are three assessment documents, handbooks. Each one focus on one level (Cycle 1: Cycle 1-4, Cycle 2: Grades 5-10) and Post Basic level: Grades 11 and 12). The document is about student's assessment; however the focus will be only on some aspects related to the suggested elements. This includes:

- Learning Outcomes for different levels
- The weightings for each element (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Grammar and vocabulary)

The Assessment document is written for teachers to guide them in assessing students' work. However, it can also be useful as it contains the learning outcomes for different levels, which are not included within the textbook itself. There are three sets of leaning outcomes.

This covers the learning outcomes for grades 1-4, 5-10 and 11 &12. It covers the elements of listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary.

The document also includes the weighting of the elements when assessing students. The weighting seems to be based on the importance of each skill in each level. It also covers ways for assessing students both formally and informally.

There are three in-service training courses, one for each level: Cycle 1, Cycle 2 and Post-Basic Education. They aim to develop the ability of teachers of English to teach in different levels effectively. Participants develop their understanding and techniques of teaching English.

These courses are aimed at developing participants' understanding of the theoretical principles, the approaches, and the language skills utilized in the new English Basic and Post- Basic Education curriculum. This is done through various methods including seminars, group tasks, workshops, presentations, guided observation in appropriate schools followed by reflection and discussion and also by individual self-directed study in the training room.

Apart from these main courses, the training department also established some orientation courses whenever needed. They focus on the changes in the curriculum every year by highlighting these changes to teachers, senior English teachers, and English supervisors responsible for the target level of schools. In the academic year 2011/2012, there were three orientation courses focusing on the changes in Grade 5 and Grade 3 course books and also the use of shared reading in grade 2.

The document is written and developed yearly for the central training centre with the different training centres in different regions. The training document highlight main aspects of course books in their training courses but there is no emphasis of any kind of training on the issues related to curriculum development and evaluation. The courses mainly are orientations courses, where teachers are helped to understand the nature of the courses, their different components and updated teaching methods.

*The General Framework of the curricula in the Sultanate of Oman* is an unpublished document by the Curriculum Evaluation Department. It is still under progress. Until writing this section, the document includes only an introduction and the aims of different levels similar to the ones discussed in the English Language Curriculum Framework. Therefore, this so far cannot be any use for developing the framework. Therefore the study is very important since as it will help to cover this lack of availability of a framework which supposed to be there as the department was founded 5 years ago since this study done, which is quite a long time in the process of developing and evaluating a national curriculum.

Analysing the available documents could cover almost all of the needed elements to build the first draft of the framework. However, the section on Curriculum Evaluation still needs general information about Curriculum Evaluation issues.

Therefore, a plan is to use one of the researcher's papers on the topic titled as 'The need for developing a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation' published in the *Proceedings of ICERI2011 Conference* in Madrid, Spain (Al-Jardani, 2011a). This article covers most of the general issues and up-to date information on Curriculum Evaluation in general and in

Oman. The article was written during the study in order to cover the missed content of the elements:

- Curriculum Evaluation
- The purpose of Curriculum Evaluation
- Who should be involved?
- Gathering the information
- The result of evaluation
- Record keeping

By using the article almost all elements suggested by the experts are covered and a draft of the framework is ready for evaluation in phase 3 by different participants including the Curriculum officers, selected officers from the undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning office and the supervisors for English Language.

#### **4.2.6 A Completed Proposed Framework**

Based on the analysis of the documents, a complete draft framework is developed. There are 13 sections included. Each section covers the suggested element. For each section, details of issues are covered as follows:

The framework starts with an introduction covering the main issues and the main terminologies definition used within the document.

##### **1. Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education**

This covers the rationale beyond teaching English in Oman. This covers the expected changes in educational philosophy, the role of English in the society, students' and parents

expectations, and increasing level of students' knowledge of the outside world, students' awareness and change in educational technology.

## 2. Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education

This covers the vision of the Curriculum Evaluation departments.

## 3. Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education

This section highlights the mission of the department too.

## 4. Stakeholders' needs and expectations

This covers the use of English in Oman in different parties and the expectations of employers, higher education institutes, parents and society in general.

## 5. Aims and learning objectives and outcomes:

This seems to be a long section as it covers the general learning objectives for the three levels of schools (Basic Education Cycle 1: grades 1-4, Basic Education Cycle 2: Grades 5-10 and Post Basic Grades 11 and 12). It also covers the learning outcomes for the same levels. This section ends with specific objectives of different levels too. This covers different skills and strategies intended to be developed for each level of schools.

## 6. Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives

This section covers two main issues, the linguistic and the non-linguistic objectives. In the linguistic objective part, vocabulary, grammar, and the four skills (reading, writing,



listening and speaking skills) are covered in the sense of methods used to use them within the curriculum.

The non- linguistic objectives cover the culture, learning strategies, and attitudes and motivation. How these objectives are tackled is discussed within this section.

#### 7. Methods & Approaches

This highlights the methods and the approach utilized within both syllabus, the *English for Me* (grades 1-10) and the *Engage with English* for grades 11 and 12.

#### 8. Textbooks & Materials

In this section, a description of the curriculum is provided and it also points out and highlights the components of the English Language Curriculum in Oman.

#### 9. Resources

This section presents some useful online resources covering different aspects which teachers and others can use. This covers searching, Internet guides and resources, crossword puzzle makers, poetry, journals, references, story telling, publishers, pronunciation, writing, teacher training, and organisation.

#### 10. Instruction Time

This section covers the instruction time- number of periods for English subject. It covers grades 1-12.

## 11. Assessment

The assessment section highlights two main issues. These are the weighting of each element including the four skills and their weight within the continuous assessment (daily assessment through observation), Class test and the end of semester test. The other issue presented within the section is the mark grades and their remark. This starts with 90%-100% as 'Excellent' to 49% and less as "need further support".

## 12. Teacher Training

This section covers the key aspect of in-service teacher training and courses covered within the training department.

## 13. Management & Evaluation

This is also a long section, as it covers different subtitles related to Curriculum Evaluation. This includes the purpose of Curriculum Evaluation, who should be involved, gathering the information, the result of evaluation and record keeping for the process of Curriculum Evaluation. The document ends with a list of references used for developing the framework.

### **4.3 Phase 3: Evaluation Phase:**

This phase intends to find out if the suggested elements for the Curriculum Evaluation Framework by the experts are useful for the Omani context and what participants of phase 3 can suggest for improving the framework.

Finally, the third phase of the study is to apply the framework for Curriculum Evaluation in the Omani context. This phase took about 5 months for planning, conducting and analysing

the interviews. The interview is semi structured. By analysing the questionnaire used, an indication was given on how different participants evaluate the framework and based on their impact a new modified version of it will be produced.

#### **4.3.1 Participants of Phase 3**

Three types of participants were involved in this phase: the Curriculum officers, selected officers from the undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning office and the supervisors for English Language.

The Curriculum officers are the same participants in phase 1; their details are shown in phase 1. They are 7; the same ones participated in phase 1. In some cases where there is a need for participants' quotation, the sample of this phase are 7 Ministry Officers (CO1-CO7) in order to use of the participants' actual words.

Officers from the undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning office represent both genders and have different qualifications and experience. They are holding Masters and one of them has a PhD in Education. They also have different years of experience in education varying from 4-16 years. Having collected this information which they filled in the questionnaire, but there is no plan to examine any difference related to these differences. Moreover, in some cases where there is a need for participants' quotation, the sample of this phase is 9 Ministry Officers (MO1- MO9) in order to use of their actual words.

Senior Supervisors and supervisors of English Language represent the whole Sultanate. They also represent both genders, and have different qualifications and experience. Most of them have the MA in education. Their years of working as teachers, senior teachers, and supervisors are between 16-21 years. In some cases where there is a need for participants'

quotation, the sample of this phase is 18 Supervisors (SS1-SS18) in order to use of their actual words.

Now, some further detail of the **quantitative and qualitative data** collected shall be provided and analysed. Analysing the questionnaire and the two parts of it, Table 4.6 shows the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire:

Table 4.6

Reliability coefficient and validity of Phase 3

<b>No of Items</b>	<b>Reliability coefficient</b>	<b>Validity</b>
18	.928	.963

The questionnaire contains 18 items suggested by different experts as a result of analysing the second questionnaire in phase 2.

The value for reliability coefficient for the questionnaire by using the Cronbach's alpha is .928 which shows that it almost has a very good reliability. As Validity refers to the accuracy of an assessment; it is .963. This was calculated as the square root of the reliability coefficient. This shows that the questionnaire is also valid in this case.

The questionnaire consists of two parts. Part 1 looks at to what extent the suggested elements are useful for inclusion in the framework for Curriculum Evaluation. The second part covers general things about the framework; the coverage of the content, the order of the elements and usefulness for the participants' work context.

### 4.3.2 The Usefulness of including the suggested elements in the framework

The part 1 questionnaire was developed electronically. This allows the participants to look at each element and by clicking on the specific element; the whole text of the actual framework appears. For example, if a participant clicks on the Rationale element in the questionnaire, the rationale text will appear directly and then after reading it, participants can click on the button "back" to return again to the element and then they can choose to what extent having the element "rationale" is useful from their point of view (Useful 5- 1 Useless). Then the participants can go on with the rest of the elements.

There is also a space titled as "suggested changes/improvements") for each element. Participants can write specific comments related to each element on things related to specific changes suggested whether related to the content itself or even any language errors found. These comments are analysed qualitative at the end of this section.

Table 4.7 shows the mean, Median, Standard Deviation and the Interquartile range of each item for part 1. More complete statistics is in Appendix E.

Table 4.7

The Mean, Median, Standard Deviation and the Interquartile range of Analysis of Phase 3- Part 1 of the questionnaire

No.	Items	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Interquartile range of Analysis
1	Rationale	4.18	5.00	1.00	2.00

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2	Vision	4.29	5.00	1.14	2.00
3	Mission	4.26	5.00	0.99	2.00
4	Stakeholders' needs and expectations	3.88	4.00	1.07	2.00
5	General Learning Objectives	4.56	5.00	0.70	1.00
6	Learning Outcomes	4.44	5.00	0.89	1.00
7	Specific Learning Objectives	4.41	5.00	0.78	1.00
8	Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives	3.97	4.00	0.90	2.00
9	Methods & Approaches	3.97	4.00	1.06	2.00
10	Textbooks & Materials	3.97	4.00	0.87	2.00
11	Resources	4.06	4.00	1.07	2.00
12	Instruction Time	3.71	4.00	1.12	2.00
13	Assessment	4.18	4.00	1.00	1.00
14	Teacher Training	4.06	4.00	1.07	2.00
15	Management & Evaluation	4.38	5.00	0.78	1.00

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Table 4.7 shows that all suggested participants were able to send their questionnaires back. Reminders were sent to check the receiving of the emails and few phone calls were conducted to encourage few participants to send their answers. Some arrived two weeks

later compared to the majority. This shows the difficulty of sending and receiving questionnaires. This might happen as the questionnaire takes a longer time to fill in as participants need to look through the whole framework and fill in the two parts of the questionnaire. The issue of big files can also be another reason of lateness which is not easily all the time to deal with as a result of slow internet and coverage issues in certain places around the Sultanate.

The mean and other figures presented in Table 4.7 the high level of agreement on the usefulness of all elements. The mean of all items are very high except for the 'Stakeholders' needs and expectations' and 'Instruction Time'. The 'Instruction Time' item received the lowest mean (3.71) but still attached a high level of agreement. There is a general trend on the usefulness of all items as there more than 50% of the participants chose option 5 as the highest usefulness for about 60% of the items (9 items).

From this, keeping all elements in the framework as they are seen as useful elements to be kept within the framework of Curriculum Framework is a key finding on this part of the questionnaire. With this high percentage of usefulness, this shows that participants show a high degree agreement with the usefulness of the framework elements for the Omani Curriculum Evaluation context and their own specific workplace. This answers the first research question of phase 3. This also supports to keep all elements within the framework for the final draft of the framework.

The second part of the questionnaire is analysed in the next section, which discusses three statements in which a question of how far participants agree with them.

### 4.3.3 Agreement Statements

*Part 2* highlights the answers of three questions about the framework. This shows how far participants agree with them.

Table 4.8

The Mean, Median, Standard Deviation and the Interquartile range of Analysis of Phase 3-Part 2 of the questionnaire

Item	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Interquartile range of Analysis
1 The content of the document covers all that is expected.	3.68	4.00	0.94	1.00
2 The order of items of the framework is reasonable.	3.91	4.00	0.62	0.25
3 The framework is useful for my working context.	4.35	4.00	0.60	1.00

Table 4.8 shows the participants responds to the items. The directions of the three items are between agreed and agree strongly, and the mean is between 3.68 for item 1 and 4.35 for item 3.



#### **4.3.4 The Content of the Document covers all that is expected**

Item 1 seems to be most argumenta item as participants might have some other items for inclusion in the framework, although the item is still agreed on. Based on this, the content of the document covers all that is expected by most of the participants. The document items are in a reasonable order as suggested by the participants and strongly agreed on that the framework will be a very useful document in the participants' situation. This includes the Curriculum Evaluation offices, the undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning office and higher level of policy makers' offices and schools and supervisors offices too. However, one of the participants MO 2 commented regarding the item "*The content of the document covers all that is expected*" statement by saying that "*Maybe because it is not clear enough! -... the word “expected” is wide and it means different things. The expectations of designers are different from evaluators’ expectations, etc.*" This was not clearly noticed within the piloting stage in which the language was clarified only and this point was not tackled then. However, a need for a one way Anova analysis to find out if there are any significant differences between participants of similar groups and within different groups.

#### **4.3.5 The Order of Items of the framework is reasonable**

This shows that the participants have shown a high agreement on the order of the elements in which the document appears. The order suggested by the experts in phase 2 seems to be reasonable. Therefore, the participants stressed the need to keep the order of the elements of the framework.

#### 4.3.6 The Framework is useful for participants' working context

With the highest mean compared to other two statements. This shows strongly that participants show the usefulness of the framework for their working context. This means that the framework can be a good document for the English Language Teaching in Oman. However, this shows also that this document can be used in their specific working context. This covers the Ministry itself including the policy makers, the Curriculum department as well as in different region in Oman. This covers schools and every teacher if possible.

In order to find differences between the three types of participants: the Curriculum officers, selected officers from the undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning office (M) and the senior supervisors for English Language (S). One way Anova for both parts of the questionnaire is shown the table.

Table 4.9

One way Anova analysis for both parts of phase 3 questionnaire

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Part1 of the questionnaire	Between Groups	.535	2	.268	.501	.610
	Within Groups	16.538	31	.533		
	Total	17.073	33			
Part2 of the questionnaire	Between Groups	.135	2	.068	.240	.788
	Within Groups	8.741	31	.282		
	Total	8.876	33			

By analysing the statistical significance for both parts, it shows a sig of (.610) in part 1 and (.788) in part 2 between the three types of participants which shows that there isn't a clear differences between them which can be analysed in depth. Based on this the previous finding on the usefulness of the framework for the English Language teaching context in Oman is supported as there is not clear different between participants who represent different work places. This includes schools and different regions, the curriculum developing department and the policy makers in the Ministry itself.

#### **4.3.7 Suggested Improvement for the Framework:**

Specific comments suggested, in part one of the questionnaire, the need to make this available for teachers and other departments such as training. The right for different practitioners to be updated is clear seen in the participants' comments.

Other common comments about *stakeholders' needs and expectations* is that this should be considered in the curriculum development stage not the evaluation which might be that this need to put in the curriculum development framework not the Curriculum Evaluation one. It is suggested that it is only for a whole change, there is a need to consider different issues and *stakeholders' needs and expectations* is one of them. However, looking back to the literature, there a need to have only curriculum framework as it is a continuous process where is affects every elements in Curriculum Evaluation process.

There are also common comments about *'Instruction Time'* and *'Teacher Training'* as they are observed in other documents. The instruction time can be seen in the teacher's book or the beginning of the year's circulars, and the training issues can be seen within the training documents. Therefore, the mean of these two items where a bit less than others.

As a general comment at the end of the questionnaire, it was stated that there is a need to review such framework from time to time and involve teachers and supervisors in this process. Participants added that we also need to involve all practitioners in schools, and within the Ministry. All can be involved to develop their own part and review it with the help from other parties.

The participants suggested little improvement. This answers the second research question of phase 3. The table attached in Appendix G, highlights some of the corrections suggested by different participants. This includes corrections. These suggested corrections are seen as a style changes. All these collection were done as well as some few spelling errors. Some of these suggestions are ways to make the language simpler, others are some changes in the information such as teaching times especially with some developed textbooks.

Moreover a participants suggested continuing developing it from time to time by involving different practitioners from in and outside the classroom "*Needs to be extensively negotiated with teachers, supervisors and reviewed form time to time (SS5)*". This supports previous comments from phase 1 in order to include all practitioners in the process of keeping the framework updated. This helps to keep them updated and to get their continuous input in the process of Curriculum Evaluation.

#### **4.4 Summary**

The findings of the three phases show that answers for the research questions are done. Phase 1 shows that there is a need for developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation for the Omani context as seen by the Curriculum Officer. This support the clear need before the research and the researchers' observations before the research as discussed in the introduction of the thesis.

Phase 2 specified the suggested elements by the experts for the framework for Curriculum Evaluation. This includes the following:

1. Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education
2. Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education:
3. Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education
4. Stakeholders' needs and expectations
5. Aims and learning objectives and outcomes
6. Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives
7. Methods & Approaches
8. Textbooks & Materials
9. Resources
10. Instruction Time
11. Assessment
12. Teacher Training
13. Management & Evaluation

Phase 3 answers the other two research questions regarding the usefulness of these elements for the Omani context and suggested improvements that participants show a high degree of the usefulness of the framework elements for the Omani Curriculum Evaluation context and their own specific workplace both for each element and in general.

Participants suggest continuing developing from time to time by involving different practitioners from in and outside the classroom. In the following chapter, depth discussion of these findings is highlighted, followed by recommendations and general conclusions of the study.

The participants showed a strong agreement with the content of the framework which helped to develop the following final draft of the framework: A complete draft of the framework is in Appendix H. The framework includes: Definitions of terms, Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education, Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education, Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education, Stakeholders' needs and expectations, Aims and learning objectives and outcomes, The General Learning Objectives, The general learning objectives for Grades 1 to 4, The general learning objectives (Grades 5-10), The general learning objectives for Grades 11&12, The Learning Outcomes, The learning outcomes for Grades 1-4, The learning outcomes for Grades 5-10, Learning outcomes for Grades 11&12, The Specific Objectives, The specific objectives for Grades 1–4, The specific objectives for Grades 5-10, Specific Objectives for Grades 11&12, Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives, Linguistic objectives, Non-linguistic objectives, Methods & Approaches, Textbooks & Materials, Textbooks, Components of the English Language Curriculum, Resources, Online Resources, Instruction Time, Assessment, The weighting for each element, Marks grades and remarks, Teacher Training, Management & Evaluation, Curriculum Evaluation, The purpose of Curriculum Evaluation, Who should be involved?, Gathering the information, The result of evaluation, Record keeping and ends with the framework's references.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the study presented in chapter four. Detailed discussions highlighting the main findings are presented. This covers the three phases of the study as well as their product. Clear recommendations are also given as a result of the study. The impact of the study covers both the Omani ELT context and the area of the study.

The discussion section will be organised along with the phases, so in depth discussion of each phase findings will be highlighted. After that, there is a recommendations section for different parties related to Curriculum Evaluation. This will be organised with the parties as well as general issues related to the study and ways to develop this project in the future. This will cover the need to put this suggested framework into practice for more time and develop a process for updating from time to time using different participants from different departments. This chapter ends with the conclusions and discusses room for more research in the field of Curriculum Evaluation.

As the research intends to develop a framework for Curriculum Evaluation for the Omani context, the findings will be treated to reach this product. Therefore, a clear link will be seen within all parts of this section to the research questions: Is there a need for developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation? What elements of Curriculum Evaluation should be considered for the framework for Curriculum Evaluation?, are these suggested elements for the Curriculum Evaluation Framework useful in an Omani context?, and what improvement could be made to the framework after using (testing) it?

## **5.1 Discussion**

In this section, the findings of the three phases will be analysed in depth and show what these findings mean to the research questions and ways to develop more understanding of the quantitative and qualitative data collected. First, discussion of phase 1 findings will be highlighted.

### **5.1.1 Phase 1: Needs Analysis**

This phase intends to answer the first research question, "Is there a need for developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation?" The need for a framework is clear from the responses of the officers. All of the participants in phase 1 agreed with the need for such a framework. This is basically to help them in their job and guide them when developing a new curriculum or revising and evaluating the existing one. Therefore, their own needs were clearly shown with their agreement on the need for the framework and their willingness to take part in this study. This also supports the researcher's point of view of the need for the framework and the effect of its absence. Having the framework would help all parties and people involved directly such as teachers and ministry officers highlighting each one's role in achieving the general objectives of each grade for example.

The purpose of the framework as a reference and a guide from the officers' point of view seems to be reasonable. The need for covering most common and key aspects of curriculum development and evaluation is essential. This will help all people involved in the Curriculum Evaluation process with the necessary details of the curriculum developed, so they can go back to it whenever needed. Therefore, it is supposed to cover all areas related to both curriculum development and evaluation and show a clear process of developing it.



Involving the people who are part of the curriculum development process seems to be important to the officers. Therefore, the need to get officers and others involved in the process of Curriculum Evaluation within the inside and outside evaluation is also essential. Therefore, there is a need to keep updating the framework continuously. In this case, officers from different departments in the Ministry of Education, teachers, and any others who can support in the evaluation process need to be informed about any changes and development.

Another clear point raised by the participants was involving Omanis into the process. This might be as a result of previous experience where they might be neglected in previous evaluation processes. As this effecting what officers are intend to do, the need to get them into every effort of developing the curriculum is important as they are the most suitable bodies when discussing issues related to learners' and the society needs and also the cultural issues. This also highlights the need to involve nationals not only be updating with the suggested changes but getting them in to the actual process of developing and evaluating the curriculum.

The framework should be written for almost all people involved in English Language Teaching. Therefore there is a need to address their needs. If we consider this framework for teachers for example, so it should cover all aspects related to the English Teaching and how this could be used as a tool for Curriculum Evaluation and future improvements. The same thing goes to the teacher trainers and curriculum officers. The teachers' trainers need to have clear statements for their role is required. This covers all curriculum development and methodology utilized within it, so this make it easier for them to pass this to teachers in their classrooms.

The officers' suggestions of element needed to be covered in the framework in phase 1 seem to be varied. Some seem to be very general things such as 'the framework of curriculum development' and others are very specific such as 'when and how to use each of instruments' of Curriculum Evaluation. This stresses the need for the framework as it was not easy for them to specify a clear list of elements for the framework which might be due to their lack of exposure to frameworks.

Some of the suggested audience of the framework suggested by all participants such as trainers- their needs are not covered when answering the last question in the interview. However this seems that the focus of it is only from the Curriculum Evaluation side and that trainers for example need to know what can be included within their training related to Curriculum Evaluation and how to train teachers to be a positive part of the Curriculum Evaluation process. Therefore, what should be covered from the curriculum officers seems to focus on issues related to Curriculum Evaluation even though they mentioned the training and the assessment aspects. Although the responses were varied, they provided the researcher with an outline of what they expected the framework to cover and their need for having it soon, which encourage the researcher to move to developing the framework in phase 2 of the study.

In the following section, the discussion of phase 2 findings is presented. This starts with round 1.

### **5.1.2 Phase 2: Developmental Phase**

As there are three rounds within this phase, separated discussion of the findings is also done. These three rounds intend to give an answer to the following question as stated in chapter 1 of this study: What elements of Curriculum Evaluation should be considered for

the framework for Curriculum Evaluation? Therefore, the focus will be mainly on what the finding can provide in order to answer it.

Round 1 has given a focus on the following issues based on the questions from the interview. The importance and the urgent need of having a framework for Curriculum Evaluation are clear from the experts' responses. The framework is seen by experts as a guide for the evaluation process and helps to ensure that objectives are achieved. This seems to be close to what officers in phase 1 said. Hence, the need for the framework is very important and clearly supported. On the other hand the framework needs to be developed and checked regularly. This highlights the experience of the experts having a framework and leaving it for a long time without updating and revising it according to any innovations.

Apart of the officers' list of the audience, who the framework can help, the experts specify the term 'stakeholders'. This includes all the suggested ones from the officers; in addition they also add 'parents' as an audience too. The word 'stakeholders' can also include employers and higher education institutes which were not mentioned in the officers' interviews. This ensures the general look of the experts and the need to involve the society and the school surrounding within the process as they need to be developed at a national level as stated by Marsh (2004) which seems to be one of the advantages of having a framework.

The framework is expected to be workable in helping to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum. It should cover evaluating the curriculum in different areas in the Sultanate, modern, remote schools, desert, coast and schools in mountains. It requires addressing their different needs and interest and whether they are met in the curriculum. The audience of the

framework is large as seen by the experts as they might have a longer experience dealing with curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation within their institutions. This stresses the good selection of the experts to develop the framework who seems to have a rich schemata and a general understanding of the Curriculum Evaluation field and the Omani ELT context. This goes along with some of the Skulmoski, et al. (2007) criteria of selecting the experts of a study using the Delphi method.

The aspects of curriculum were almost mentioned as well as other issues related to English Language teaching. This also covers teacher training and students assessment and basically all input given to teachers. This supports the central focus on teachers as they are one of the main issues in any teaching process and curriculum development.

The 20-30 minutes of interview with the experts was useful to come up with a good list of elements for the framework. The interviews were used in identifying the list of elements. The list covers three side of the framework. The policies, vision, mission, and theories which first side of the curriculum are part of its underlying structure and the rationale behind developing it in the way it is developed. The second side is evaluating the specifics of the curriculum such as course components and third side is other aspects including the assessment and the teacher training issues. This highlights the point of the importance of starting a Delphi method with an interview, which helps to uncover what each expert impression about the topic in general and certain points in depth, although it is a time consuming on planning, conducting and analysing the data collected.

For round 2 findings which was in a form of a questionnaire shows a number of issues which will be highlighted. As the questionnaire only contains 18 items, that was easy to develop and manage. It seems that the number of items helped to encourage participants to

do it fast and to get filled ones from all participants. This helped to have a very reliable and valid one. A very good reliable and valid questionnaire drives a good result of it. A good analysis of the interview in round 1 helped to get into a very agreed list of items which easily can included in the framework. However, this might have encouraged them not to add some other elements as they felt they need only to agree with the list from the interviews. This can be answered as there were some empty spaces for them to put some more if they felt there is a need for this as well as clear instruction was stated within the introduction of the questionnaire and even for the question itself (See Appendix D: Phase 2 Data Collection Instruments, Round 2: Questionnaire)

The experts seem to be agreed with what they point out individually in round 1. This shows that they are certain with what the framework should include based on their experiences. This provided a good support to get to round 2 for putting them into a reasonable order. The huge expectation of the items seems to have influenced some of the experts choices, as it got the only 'strongly disagrees' point. The stakeholders' item is the most argued item is the questionnaire. However, even with this, still the responses were highly positive towards the elements. This positive attitude of dealing with the elements stressed the good analysis of the interviews in round 1 and the higher level of conciseness of the experts within the different rounds. These elements could be easily developed as statements in phase 3 in order to ensure developing a curriculum evaluation based on them highlighting quality within each element as stated by O'Brien (2005) they cover and help to good practice, a clear plan of what should be achieved. This covers for example stating a clear objectives for each English textbook for each grade, stating what should be reached at the end of the grade's academic year.

Studying the findings of round 3 and Phase 2 in general, it seems that they quite agree in both round 1 and 2 seems to be different in round 3. Although participants strongly agreed with most items in round 2, this seems different in round 3. The responses were varied and ranked. For round 3, the second questionnaire, it focuses mainly on the order of the suggested elements. Using different types of analysis helps to get into better way to analyse data. This shows the need to use different types such as analysing different statistics including the mean, standard deviation, the interquartile analysis, median and the Anova if necessary in order to develop a reasonable, reliable and valid data. This seems to be working well and helped to put them in a reasonable order.

As one of the main findings of round 3 was to reduce the number of items, this helped to give more focus on each item in the framework and also avoid repetition. This seems to be useful to the users of the framework, curriculum officers, and policy makers in the Ministry and also the senior supervisors who are observing and supporting both supervisors and teachers to cope with the curriculum. This also helps to make the proposed framework clear and to the point with least repetition.

Some of information needed for the framework is available, but can only be found in different documents. This makes it difficult for the Curriculum Officers to find information when needed. However, how updated are these information was needed to be observed which might have taken a long time to process to phase 3. A document which covers all aspects related to English Language Curriculum Evaluation is essential. This also supports the need for this proposed framework.

Here are some other issues related to each document analysed. The existing Curriculum Framework contains some of the items suggested for the Curriculum Evaluation

Framework. It is a good source of items directly related to curriculum development in Oman. However, as mentioned before, most issues related to Curriculum Evaluation cannot be found in this document. On the other hand, a number of coursebooks are evaluated and developed yearly as stated in the Introduction of this study as every year; the curriculum section of each subject suggests the grade which they expect the Department of Curriculum Evaluation to work on. The evaluation process should have made some changes or suggestions for development on the coursebooks evaluated. This might affect its objectives and activities types which are not checked regularly within the framework. This was the time to check these and then develop the main elements within the curriculum framework in order to make them usable for the proposed curriculum evaluation framework.

There is a need for having the learning outcomes for each grade as there are also not seen in the curriculum framework. They are only mentioned in the assessment document for each level and only for joined grades. The need for identifying the learning outcomes based on the objectives of each grade is vital for the future curriculum development and evaluation. This might have confused teachers as they see the objectives and the learning outcomes come from two different places. The objectives are stated by the curriculum department and the learning outcomes comes from the assessment departments. A general observation of the learning outcomes of a level and the objectives of the same level, it is easy to notice that they are not very related; however this will require a separate research.

The weighting of each skill and for each level helps teachers to give different level of focus in order to achieve the learning outcomes which are supposed to be shown clearly. This highlights the need to work cooperatively with the curriculum department to develop both the learning outcomes and the weighting of each skill for each grade. This should be

considered when redeveloping each grade and to be included within the new version of the framework in the future.

A general overview of the training issues will only be added to the framework and a note of that there is a need for key aspects of Curriculum Evaluation need to be addressed. This would encourage and support teachers in their role in Curriculum Evaluation. This was missed from the training document. However, there is an argument between the curriculum officers and the experts regarding including the training issue in the Curriculum Evaluation framework, but they seem to agree with the need to involve issues related to Curriculum Evaluation within the training document and their programme too. A need to produce a framework for Curriculum Evaluation as the department were found in 2011, which very similar to the first edition published in 1999 and an urgent need to publish one is important. On the other hand, the curriculum framework is republished in 2011, which is very similar to the first edition published in 1999. It is easily observed that it is almost the issues of not having learning outcomes and similar objectives for the evaluated grades coursebooks. Therefore, an urgent need to publish one is important. It seems that the proposed framework can be a good basis for future frameworks.

The article selected discussed and analysed in the findings chapter is an up-to date one and covers most of the issues related to Curriculum Evaluation until developing a new or a modified one. This article seems to include generic as well as culturally related information as it is about the curriculum evaluation process in Oman. The information selected from the article will be acknowledged within the framework document. However, the need to continue developing this based on experience of dealing and using the framework is also essential. This can be done with the support of the curriculum evaluation members and teachers too.



### **5.1.3 Phase 3: Evaluation Phase**

Discussing the final phase is important as it leads to draw conclusions and to produce the study product 'Framework for Curriculum Evaluation in Oman'. Phase 3 findings are supposed to answer the two research questions: Are these standards (elements) suggested for the Curriculum Evaluation Framework useful for the Omani context? And what improvement could be made to the framework after using (testing) it?

This section will highlight the main findings of the phase and what does the answer of these questions mean to the topic researched. Participants in phase 3 show a rich input on the usefulness and practicality of the product. This shows a good evaluation stage of the research. On the other hand, the questionnaire is a reliable and a valid one. Based on this, result can be trusted.

Part 1 findings show that different participants agree on the usefulness of all items (74%-91%). This shows a very high agreement with selected items by the experts. Therefore, there is a need to keep all the items and develop them according to the comments suggested by the participants. This goes along with the over training quality model as it focuses on the input of the teaching and learning process, the input of the curriculum stated as the general aims, learning outcomes and linguistic and non-linguistic objectives. This also covers the process of teaching plans and observation and the output of the process when it comes to the evaluation and students assessments and the need to analyse them in order to improve the quality of education as stated by Al-Nabhani (2007).

The same factors appear in part 2. Part 2 also highlighted that different participants of different position have similar responses and a general agreement between them can be highlighted. These agreements are to do with content coverage, the order of the elements

and the usefulness of the framework. The findings of this phase support the findings and the interpretations of the previous two phases of the study.

Apart from this, there are two other issues discussed in the findings section. These are the availability of the document and the need to continue developing it. The entire context affect some of the participants as most document are not available in schools at the moment and the need to make them available for all people in the field and the Ministry itself and also make it easy to be access. This seems to have a general agreement among all participants. This was clearly stated by most of the participants of this phase which can be due to their previous experience of non-availability of documents which seems to be unfair for some of them.

The need to develop a clear framework covering all ELT aspects which covers all needed information for all parties and researchers. This framework can be the basis for such project. There is also a need to continue developing by creating a systematic process of developing the framework as well as the Curriculum Evaluation task itself. This is a key issue as this will help to keep the framework up- to date and to keep everyone involved in the process and the curriculum itself. These general comments provided which are stressed by most of the participants can show the general impression of the need for some kind of framework and its importance.

#### **5.1.4 The Product: The English Language Curriculum Evaluation Framework**

The product of this study, the English Language Curriculum Evaluation Framework, is attached in Appendix H. This was created as a result of the three phases of the research. By ensuring the need of it by the Curriculum officers and developing it through three rounds by the experts selected using the Delphi methods and evaluating it in phase 3 by 34

participants including the curriculum officers and English supervisors and members of the Undersecretary of Curriculum and Learning Office. This process worked well and ended by a reasonable and a workable framework for Curriculum Evaluation in Oman.

The main elements of this framework are Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education, Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education, Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education, Stakeholders' needs and expectations, Aims and learning objectives and outcomes, Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives, Methods & Approaches, Textbooks & Materials, Resources, Instruction Time, Assessment, Teacher Training, and the Management & Evaluation element. These elements cover almost all areas suggested by different participants in different phases of the study. This shows a good flow of the study.

On the other hand, the elements cover the interest of different departments involved in ELT in Oman. Although, all departments, (curriculum, assessment, supervision, teacher training) should have an interest to all these aspects, however specific issues related to each one is highlighted in depth. For the Curriculum department elements such as Aims and learning objectives and outcomes are some of the most needed. The learning outcome which is an important issue was not seen in their old curriculum framework produced in 1999, it can be seen now in this framework as a result of this study. On other hand, a whole section is found on teacher training which can be developed in the future for the teacher training section. The students assessment issues are covered as a separated section along with other issues such as Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives which helps to develop assessment tools for the two types of objectives.

Moreover, elements such as the rationale and policy, vision and mission of the Ministry of Education help the policy makers and officers involved in the ELT policy as well as curriculum developers to come back to it whenever there is a need to evaluate and develop a coursebook. However, a need to look and develop these from time to time based on the world changes and changes in the society and its needs and interest. This is also related to the element on stakeholders' needs and expectations. This is part of reconsidering them in the process of Curriculum evaluation but also to considering re-writing them regularly based on new innovations and different stakeholders' expectations. This goes along with O'Brien (2005) as in the planning and the evaluation processes, stakeholders are also encouraged to develop continuous professional development of all parties involved. This shows that it is everyone's role to include and inform others about their own processes and needs. There is clearly room here for research on this issue in order to state clear and planned expectations.

Within the study the term 'Elements' was used to address each section of the framework. This makes the framework clear and shows its reasonable layout. Another layout issue is that although some of these elements are still much related such as Aims and learning objectives and outcomes and the Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives element as the former can be easily a part of the Aims section. This also goes to Textbooks & Materials element and Resources element and also Instruction Time and Methods & Approaches. These and some others can be easily combined and developed further. However, for the purpose and the result of this study these needs to be put as there are based on the suggestions of the participants of the study.

The developed framework covered almost all components of the Common European Framework (Council for Cultural Co-operation, 2001). These include needs identification

which are covered as Rationale and the policy of the Ministry of Education and Stakeholders in the developed framework. Other elements in the European Framework such as determination of objectives, content definition, teaching and learning methods and the evaluation, testing and assessment are almost there in this developed framework, although it looks like that some of these were separated in order to make it easier for the reader and the user of the document.

The example of the Western Australian framework (Curriculum Council, 2012) presented in the Literature Review chapter sets the 'knowledge, understandings, skills, values and attitudes' as what students are expected to gain. These need to be covered within any framework. For the developed framework, these are clearly covered within the aims elements and there are stated clearly in the linguistics and non-linguistics objectives for all school grades. The changes in family, culture, technology, workplace and jobs are clearly addressed in the Rationale and policy, Vision and the mission of the Ministry of Education in the first three sections of the framework. However, these changes need to be identified as they are continuously changing, therefore, this stresses the need to look back and develop the framework regularly.

Moving to the two examples of frameworks from the United States (Department of Education- Pennsylvania, 2012; Department of Education- California, 2012), this shows more relation to the English Language teaching in Oman. The selected US examples were very generic and can be seen as a general Education framework for a state. So, this developed framework covers only the English Language without neglecting the surrounding effect of the society, parents and the stakeholders in general.

Apart of this the framework is different from the international framework presented earlier is that the cultural issues were clearly shown and developed. This would help the national and foreigners working here in the education party as well as other parties as stakeholders to get a good idea of not only what is expected from the school graduate students but also what they are expected to provide and what support they need to give. A whole section within the framework is developed and titled as Non-linguistic objectives covering the culture, learning strategies, attitudes and motivation. These were developed based on the needs of the Omani students, although these need to be developed further in the future, but it shows a good start in having it. For sure the Omani culture, attitude and other related issues are a bit different from the rest in the world. Therefore, presenting these for all parties in the country is useful. However, it is also important to say that even within Oman, some of these cultures and attitudes may differ in different parts of Oman which supports the need for different framework and maybe different coursebooks addressing each part of Oman needs and the society expectations, without neglecting the whole national expectations of key skills and learning strategies which might be common throughout the world. These international needs and expectations are clearly stated within the developed framework.

Involving a section on teacher training makes a clear difference from other framework, as training seems to be separated and only shown in a separated document. The rationale of having it in this one document apart from the participants' suggestion and their view of the need for it in one document, is that it helps to get all parts of the responsible bodies get to know what others are doing. This helps teachers in schools to sort orders and suggestions of different departments and fit them together to make the tasks smoothly done.

On the other hand, a simple comparison between this developed framework and the existing documents developed separately by the different departments, this is more of a holistic document and an up-to date one. Others are mainly focusing on one aspect and some of them are out of date regarding the changes in the curriculum, the stakeholders' expectations such as the family, society and workplace changes. Therefore, it can be clearly stated that this developed framework covers most areas of ELT in Oman; the needs of almost all the departments were included in the process and also with up-to-date information.

Discussing the findings of each phase seems to develop clear recommendations for different departments and people involved in Curriculum Evaluation in Oman. The next section in this chapter will highlight the main recommendation which can be worked out as a result of this study.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

This section will highlight the main recommendations suggested as a result of analysing and discussing the findings of this study. This will be organised into different parts which covers all aspects related to the research findings and the topic of Curriculum Evaluation. There are different parts to this, covers issues related to the research itself, the need to cover all elements, and to involve different departments and individuals related. This also covers the need to review and develop the curriculum regularly, the need for future research on different ELT and curriculum issues, the availability and making the document viable to everyone, and finally a need to create a general ELT framework.

### **5.2.1 The Research**

The list agreed by all participants seems to be a good list of items for the framework and for any general Framework for Curriculum Evaluation which provides a set of guidelines to be used within a certain context (March 2004, p. 19). These guidelines help as clearly seen in defining the local context, identifying learners' needs and linking them to the aims of the curriculum (Cunningsworth, 1995; Mariani, 1983). However this also covers other issues related to the ELT context in Oman and the area of curriculum evaluation. It is recommended that the list can be a good basis of elements suggested for different Curriculum Evaluation framework for any English context. This includes rationale and policy of the Ministry of Education, vision and the mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education, stakeholders' needs and expectations, aims and learning objectives and outcomes and linguistic and non-linguistic objectives. In addition to methods and approaches, textbooks and materials, resources, instruction time, assessment, teacher training and finally management & evaluation element.

The list covers all aspects related to curriculum philosophy and general Education policy, the vision and the mission of the curriculum for the target teaching context. Other elements such as the general aims, specific objectives, methods, teaching approaches and the materials used for different courses is also included. The learners' assessment and in-service training is also suggested within the framework. The framework also included some information about the management and Curriculum Evaluation aspects of ELT in that specific context.

Choosing the right participants in the evaluation stage helps to develop a good chance for the framework to be analysed and developed. Choosing participants such as officers who



took part in phase 1 as need analysts and as evaluators along with the policy makers from the Undersecretary Officer and senior supervisors who manage the curriculum delivery in the field in all over the Sultanate in phase 3 was important. Considering the main users of any product this supports getting a useful and usable result. Selecting the curriculum officers for phase 1 'needs analysis' and for phase 3 'product evaluation' seems to be supportive and helped to make sure that there is a need for a framework for Curriculum Evaluation in phase 1 and get their comments regarding the proposed framework in the last phase of the research.

The experts selected from different organisations including the Ministry of Education, also support and guide developing the framework through clear answers in the whole phase 2. During the interviews in round 1, they were clear about the importance of the framework and what it should cover. In round 2, they mostly agreed with the analysed list of elements from round 1 and in round 3, they confirmed their choices and their suggested order of the elements. This goes a long with the Skulmoski, et al. (2007) stated criteria. Their experience and knowledge and willingness to take part in this research were helpful. On the hand, their reasonable skill of using computer was also supportive as it took reasonable time for them to finish and send completed questionnaires via emails.

The other two type of participants in phase 3 who are similar in their evaluation with the officers as there is not a clear differences between them which can be analysed in depth by using the one way Anova analysis for both parts of the questionnaire. From this, a good selection of participants for any research who should have enough knowledge of the topic and an understanding of the target context supports developing and evaluating a new product within a context.

Good analysis of the interviews which took a long time to work on did help to produce a good list of items which the experts seem to be mostly in agreement with. Analysing interviews and the most input from them in phase 1 and round 1 of phase 2 consumed much time and effort. However, this seems to have developed a clear basis for developing the framework later on. Through a detailed discussion with the curriculum officers and experts, the researcher was able to work out a clear outline for the framework. This enabled the framework to be developed and evaluated in the next phases of this doctoral research.

### **5.2.2 Cover All Issues Related**

Any framework including this one is recommended to cover all aspects related to the target topic. Therefore, the need to cover these issues is essential. Based on the study findings the framework needed to cover all key issues related to curriculum development and evaluation so officer and others related to curriculum can rely on it during the process of curriculum development. As this is the key issue, stating the rationale of the curriculum, the aims and other details is vital. These need to be clearly stated and readable for all people involved in the ELT process. Therefore, the developed framework has covered almost all areas expected by the participants in different phases with the study.

The need for a way to evaluate whether the learners' needs and interest are met regardless the type of place where they stay in. Their needs are expected to be reviewed from time to time as they are developing and changing especially with rapid technological developments and appearance of new devices which they need to have a good picture of it and the best way to deal with it positively before using it.

A need to ensure that the framework covers aspects related to curriculum development and evaluation as well as supervision, training, assessment and other areas of English Teaching

in Oman. They all seem to be as important as they all link with each other. The need to contact different parties related to English Language Teaching and keep teachers and other audiences of the Framework up-to-date with information related to this specific subject.

There is need to develop a framework which mainly serves the evaluation department, but also consider other parties' role in supporting the Curriculum Evaluation department. This would be by encouraging teachers and highlighting issues related to Curriculum Evaluation in the training workshops from the training aspect. Discussing these issues can be done during the school visits and while lessons are discussed by the supervisors. In short, all parties related to English Teaching in Oman need to use their role in encouraging a good process of developing and revising the curriculum continuously.

One of the key things recommended to put in a framework is the training which seems to be an important thing to have within the Curriculum Evaluation framework, this is discussed separately. The study also shows the need to develop some materials for teachers in both pre- and in service training, in which teachers get a clear idea of input of different types of Curriculum Evaluation and how they can be involved in the evaluation process. As the Ministry of Education role is only on the in-service training task, focusing on the Curriculum Evaluation aspect is also important. The training department needs to consider training teachers on their role in the Curriculum Evaluation task apart from training them on methodology and English proficiency.

### **5.2.3 Involving All Parties**

The importance of involving officer and people related to the curriculum in different communities related to the Curriculum Evaluation. This can start with the higher committee related to the general philosophy of education and English teaching in Oman ending in the

process of Curriculum Evaluation and development. As they are the key workers and the ones who are developing and revising the course books, they are supposed to be involved in all of these stages. The officers need to be part of all stages and levels of curriculum development and evaluation and not only in the part of writing the course books. They should be part of finalising the main ELT general goals and evaluating the proposed changes in the field too.

Making sure that Omanis are involved in the whole process of curriculum development including planning, writing, revising and evaluating the curriculum is essential. Omani children and youth are more known by their nationals exactly like Malaysian children's needs and interest are mostly known to Malaysians. From this, it is expected to include the nationals in all stages of the curriculum development, evaluation and even following up the recommendation of any evaluation task. This helps to ensure a valid and reliable input to the context and to match them to the needs and the expectations of the target audience including the learners, teachers and the society.

Communicate with different departments related to English Language Teaching is needed in order to keep the framework up-to-date with needed information. A plan to keep people involved updated by getting their feedback whether yearly or every two years so they can help to develop the framework and keeping it upgraded. The people can be students, teachers, and all levels in schools, Ministry officers and policy makers, as well as different institutes and universities and workplace and employers in Oman who will be receiving the outcome of the English teaching. This communication needs to take place on a regular basis as the input provided for teachers and learners needs to be clear, not repeated or even not contradictory. This need to be enough planned, circulated among different departments related before they are sent to the target audience.

Parents, job market and higher education institute should also be considered when developing the framework and the framework need to address their expectations. This is considered in all levels of curriculum development and evaluation. For example, objectives need to be revised regularly along with other curriculum aspects to meet the stakeholders' expectation which are changing over time according to the change of life style and technology. The need to develop a yearly meeting between all parties involved or affected by the level of English in Oman within and outside the Ministry. The Ministry of Education needs to be the main organiser of this event, listening to different stakeholders and discussing planned development. This would encourage showing of different parties plans among different departments within the Ministry first and then within all ELT interests in the whole Sultanate.

The issue of involving teachers in future in developing the curriculum and even the framework is essential. This helps to keep them in the process and actively involved in it. This, on the other hand, would help central education officers to control the process which seems to go along with one of the disadvantages of having a detailed framework as stated by Marsh (2004, p. 22).

#### **5.2.4 Develop and Evaluate the Framework Regularly**

The existing Curriculum Framework needs to be developed regularly and should cover other aspects of curriculum such the learning outcomes of each level and grade. There is also a need to evaluate the framework regularly in order to check and develop the framework coverage of development of all aspects. A clear plan for revising the framework and specifying a period of doing that is essential. It is the Ministry's responsibility to set the framework, and to revise its content continuously. This should include the objectives and

the rationale for English Teaching must be developed based on the changing interests and needs of stakeholders.

The oral/written reports developed within any Curriculum Evaluation task need to address all other tasks related to the process. This covers re-analysing the situation, defining the ELT objectives, designing the teaching-learning course books, implementing and assessing and evaluating them. This ensures that any evaluating task needs to work on different levels especially when this is done in a national level, as the evaluation tasks going on recently is mainly focusing on the teaching-learning process and the coursebooks only.

### **5.2.5 Publicising and Availability of the Framework**

The document needs to be publicised and available for anyone who needs it; an electronic copy is vital. Having the framework easily accessible is important. This could be by sending copies to all schools and different departments in the ministry and whoever needs those including colleges and universities and workplaces if they ask for them. The availability of this document would help to state everyone's role and ways to evaluate it. This will also help to ensure useful input from different parties if they have copies of the framework to develop it in the future.

Apart from sending copies of it and wasting paper, one suggestion was to put the framework into the Ministry's websites where everyone can access it anytime and anywhere. By this, there is no need to print it out and interested bodies can access online and print what they are interested in. This would expand the audience of the framework and ensures working and developing it for the better.

This will encourage everyone to take their responsibility to do their task on time and in a good manner. It makes it easy to follow things up and to help different departments whenever needed.

### **5.2.6 Developing a General ELT Framework**

Although the developed framework covered different issues related to the ELT in Oman, it can be argued that there are still some areas missing especially things to do with the supervision area. This is because this was not suggested by the different participants of the study. Developing a general ELT framework means covering all aspects related to that. This can be used as a reference for the EL Curriculum development, Curriculum Evaluation, methodology, teacher training and professional development, students' assessment and EL supervision.

This framework developed can be a good basis for such project as it covers most of the list such as rationale and policy of the Ministry of Education, vision and the mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education. However, some of these elements can be further developed and details added to make it more useful. On other hand, developing similar framework for other school subject is also important and developing existing ones is needed if there is any.

### **5.2.7 Future Research Areas**

This research has shown some gaps in research within this area. Apart from the need to keep developing the product of the research "The Curriculum Evaluation Framework', there is a need to develop some other research tasks. These have appeared during the study and

some of the participants have also stressed them apart from the need for the developed framework. Although there are mainly needed; only two of them will be highlighted.

A need for a separated research for the stakeholders' needs and expectation is clearly seen from the analysis of the round 2 of phase 2. This can include parents, job market and higher education institute. This can cover the stakeholders' needs and expectations from the education system but also what the education system would expect from them and also what a system output especially students would expect from them too. This should cover investigating all parties and may include some document analysis as well.

The study also highlights the need to develop specific learning outcomes for each grade covering all skills and not only for each level. These are not developed clearly in both the curriculum framework and the assessment documents. Therefore, a joint work can be done by these two departments with the support of others to set them and then publicise them to all especially teachers, students and even parents. However, planned research on this is vital.

The next section highlights the impact of the study. This covers both the Omani ELT context and the Curriculum Evaluation field.

### **5.3 The Implications of the Study**

Developing the framework for Curriculum Evaluation and the elements included can be an addition both for the Omani ELT context and also to the literature of Curriculum Evaluation in general. This study seems to be a good starting point for developing a framework and continue updating it for the Omani context, which is more highlighted in this section.



### **5.3.1 Omani ELT Context**

The study shows how English language is seen by government and within the society. It also highlighted issues related to English Language teaching, development and evaluation. The study shows the Omani context and ways to develop it. The study shows a good description of the ELT context and helps to raise awareness of it which direct and support developing the flow of the study and the data collection methods.

One of these points discussed is the need for the English Language Curriculum Evaluation framework based on miscommunication observed and then based on phase 1 of the study. The study could reflect the curriculum officers' urgent need is for such framework. The framework helps to bring all the elements observed in different documents into one complete one in addition to some other missing information needed and required by the users of the framework.

Within the Curriculum Evaluation process, teachers and students are considered within the evaluation process. However, the study helped to show that the process of evaluation now seems as a separated process where every year selective course books are done and evaluation is mainly based on immediate needs. However, a need to develop a systematic process is required which helps to miss working on some of these course books.

The study helped to highlight the need to consider different stakeholders including parents, higher institutions and workplace. The entire context shows that here is a kind of consideration to the parents through having a special questionnaire to highlight their perception towards the curriculum; however this can be developed further. On the other hand, higher institutions and job market need to involve in such process and they are the

ones getting over from schools. Developing a good communication link which should be continuous is needed.

The study adds a framework for the English Language Curriculum Evaluation in Oman. It can be seen as a start point for this aspect. The elements included within the framework can be a good list which can be developed further. Developing a better standards and also specific outcomes for each grade which will be discussed in depth in the recommendation section is important. The need for continue revising the curriculum regularly, to involve nationals at different levels as well as other aspects such as developing a general ELT framework for Oman is also required too. In addition to continue developing the framework and updated it when needed.

### **5.3.2 Other ELT Context**

As the study developed a valuable product for the English language Curriculum evaluation in Oman, this can be a basis for future studies. The elements of the framework can be developed and adapted to suit other ELT context. Some of these elements can be used with some of nearby context such as in the Arab world counties.

Researchers can also use this study as a start point, using the literature review developed, methodology utilized and also the main findings of the study- Framework of Curriculum Evaluation.

### **5.3.3 Curriculum Evaluation Field**

On the other hand, the study also added to the literature of Curriculum Evaluation both in a better understanding of and also developing a modified framework which is more suitable for Oman and for other context.

The study highlights some key concepts on curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation including who should be involved such as teachers, learners (students) senior teachers, supervisors, schools principles, officers, parents and the society, stakeholders. It also discussed aspects related to different types and dimensions of evaluation, and types of data collection methods. These were highlighted along with an emphasis on the Omani context to make them clearer.

The study also helps to show only three curriculum models. For the purpose to suite the Omani context, one of these models, Skilbeck Situational model, was developed to work better with the Omani EL context. Moreover, the study highlights some examples of frameworks from Australia and United States, showing how the content of each one and stating that this study limit to developing a framework for the English Language, stressing the standards needed for it.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

The study intends to develop a framework for Curriculum Evaluation in Oman, as there is no framework for public in the time of this study. The study highlights the need for this framework with the support of the curriculum officers of the Ministry of Education in Oman. It also develops the framework with the support of selected experts from different organisations by using the Delphi method.

The study produced a framework which seems to cover all Curriculum Evaluation elements. The study found that a general acceptance from different parties could be noticed. The participants from phase 3 of the data collection; curriculum officers, English supervisors, and members from the undersecretary of Curriculum and learning office shows

a high acceptance of the framework but suggest continue developing it regularly and also involve all types of practitioners from inside and outside the classroom.

The study also recommended different aspects related to curriculum officers, assessment and training officers regarding Curriculum Evaluation and a research for the stakeholders' needs and expectations. Involving the national in all curriculum development process is a key thing, covering all aspects related, develop a good communication channel between different departments related to ELT in Oman. This would help to share input provided for schools and develop the framework regularly is some of the main recommendations of the study.

Developing a general ELT framework covering aspect of curriculum development and evaluation, methodology ELT methodology, teacher training and professional development, EL students' assessment and supervision is a vital step. The study also highlight the need for this framework or the general one to be publicise by different means including putting it into the Ministry's official website.

To conclude, this study and the framework developed can be a good basis for similar projects. The list agreed on by all participants seems to be a good list of elements for any framework with the note of the need for continuous development.

## **Summary**

The chapter summarised the entire doctoral study and the findings that the study produced. It covers the discussion of the findings from chapter 4, the recommendations based on the findings developed, and the impact of the research on both the Curriculum Evaluation field and the Omani ELT context and the conclusions of the study.

In the discussion section, a clear deep analysis of the findings was developed by relating it to what they mean to the researcher, the research questions, the curriculum field in a general context and most pertinently, the Omani context. It is organised into phases and each point was highlighted and discussed in turn. This was followed by the recommendations which are divided into sub-sections: the research, covering all issues, involving all parties, development and regular evaluation publicising and availability of the framework. This was done with the main aim of developing a general ELT framework and future research.

The impact of the research on both Omani ELT context and Curriculum Evaluation field is highlighted. This covers most issues related to what this research has added to the researcher, the Curriculum Evaluation field in general and to the Omani ELT context in particular. The chapter ends with a conclusion to cover what the research intends to develop, the product developed and future plans on both the ELT context and the Curriculum Evaluation and ELT field in general.

In general then, the evolving nature of Oman both nationally and internationally, necessitates an up to date and regular form of Curriculum Evaluation to be put in place when it comes to the ELT field. As this research has shown, previous attempts to account for ELT in the classroom by the Ministry of Education have not provided a full form of Curriculum Evaluation. This research has provided a possible avenue that the Ministry might follow in order to amend the current status of ELT in Oman. This seems extremely important given the evolving position of Oman as a tourist destination in the Gulf. In the future, English proficiency will be an asset to employers and to those who wish to develop businesses internationally. With this in mind, working toward a stable, thorough and regular form of Curriculum Evaluation, like the one suggested here, is forward thinking.

Given the research that the researcher has planned, carried out and evaluated here and the convenient timing of my study, he hopes that this work shall evolve the status of Curriculum Development in Oman for the betterment of the status of ELT in the national education system.

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## Appendix A: Document Analysis Sheets

### a. Focus-Group Meeting with Teachers

Focus-Group Meeting (With teachers of Grade :....)
---

Date/.....

Region/.....

School: .....

Number of Teachers: .....

Meeting Moderator: .....

---

1. Are the aims of a lesson always clear to you?

.....

2. Do students know the aims of the lesson?

.....

3. Do you think the amount of language aspects (List / Spk / Rdng / Wrng / Gramr / Voc/Spil/Punc) suitable for your students? Or is it too little or too much?

.....

4. Are all language skills practiced? Should there be more focus on a particular skill?

.....

5. Do your students like the content of the book? Which part(s) do they find more challenging? Why do you think?

6. Do you think the activities in the class book and skills book are varied enough?

.....

7. How do you assess your students during lessons?

.....

8. How useful is the Teacher's Book to you?

.....

9. How useful is the Resource Pack (printed and non-printed) to you?

.....

10. If you were to make changes in the textbooks of this grade, what changes you would make, and why?

.....

11. What are the things you like in this grade? Why?

.....

12. What are the things you don't like in this grade? Why?

.....

13. What are the main challenges in teaching this grade?

.....

**b. classroom Observation Sheet**

**The Directorate General of Curriculum Development**

**Curriculum Evaluation Department**

**Classroom Observation**

Visitor: _____	Date: _____	Region: _____
School: _____	Teacher's Gender: _____	Class: _____ Lesson: _____

N	Preparation Stage	Achieved		Comments
		Yes	No	
1	Inform learners about lesson's topic			
2	Inform learners about the aims of the lesson			
3	Inform learners about learning values			
4	Display lesson's stages and how to achieve it			
5	Activates learners' prior knowledge			

---

N	Teaching Stage	Achieved		Comments
		Yes	No	
1	Teacher follows teacher's book			

2	Introduces tasks to learners			
3	Varies the activities; individual, groups, etc			
4	Benefits from proposed strategies to implement the lesson			
5	Uses the textbook appropriately			
6	Uses the textbook activities and examples			
7	Uses the suggested teaching materials appropriately			
8	Uses the Textbook's pictures appropriately			
9	Develops students' thinking skills			
10	Considers students' individual differences			
11	Links lesson's stages properly			

---

N	Assessment Stage	Achieved		Comments
		Yes	No	
1	Uses continuous assessment			
2	Uses summative assessment			
3	Other/			

-----

-----

N	Implementation Difficulties	Achieved		Comments
		Yes	No	
1	Time			
2	Incomplete mastery of discipline content			
3	Content not suitable for learners' level			
4	Lack of teaching materials			
5	Other/			

### c. Evaluation Questionnaire for Teachers

#### The Directorate General of Curriculum Development

#### Curriculum Evaluation Department

#### Evaluation of Grade ... A&B: English For Me

#### (Teacher's Questionnaire)

*Dear Teacher,*

The Curriculum Evaluation Department (CED) has been established to evaluate the existing curricula's strengths and weaknesses and help with their development. We strongly believe that teachers play an essential role in this evaluation/development process because they are the ones who enact curriculum with their learners on a daily basis.

We would appreciate you taking some of your time to fill in this questionnaire based on your actual classroom experience. Your comments are valuable to us, so please fill in the questionnaire *carefully* and add any other comments that you deem essential.

#### **When you complete the questionnaire please remember to:**

- 1- Complete the Evaluation Form (only) if you are teaching the intended textbooks.
- 2- Fill in the General Information section first because it will be used as variables for the study.
- 3- Answer all questionnaire items.
- 4- Write *clear and precise* notes and suggestions (**e.g.** refer to page number).

- 5- If you need more space for any other comments, please use blank sheets, and number your comments according to the parts/items on the questionnaire, so that we know where they belong to.

*Your feedback will be greatly appreciated and valued as we conduct our evaluation.*



**The Directorate General of Curriculum Development**

**Curriculum Evaluation Department**

**Evaluation of Grade 7 A&B: English For Me**

**(To be completed by the TEACHER)**

Book Title: English for Me Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester: \_\_\_\_\_ Region:

\_\_\_\_\_

Years of experience teaching Grade 8: \_\_\_\_\_ Years of experience in general:

\_\_\_\_\_ Gender: (M/F) \_\_\_\_\_

**FIRST: THE STUDENT'S TEXTBOOKS (CB & SB)**

<b>Analysis Criteria</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Specific Further Notes with Page Numbers</b>
<b>Part 1: Objectives</b>					
1- Are clear for each unit					
2- Are clear for each lesson					
3- Are achievable					
4 -Are measurable					
5- Are appropriate to learners' level					
6- Address the four language skills:					

Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.					
7- Address vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and punctuation					
8- Develop higher-order thinking skills (application, analysis, synthesis, etc)					
9- Achieve a balance between cognitive and Psychomotor learning					
<b>Part 2: Content</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Specific Further Notes with Page Numbers</b>
1- Achieves the objectives					
2- Is up-to-date					
3- Is well-organized					
4- Is motivating and interesting.					
5- Is appropriate to learners' level					
6- Is varied in terms of topics					
7- Suits the time allotted					
8- Is integrated with other subjects					
9- Teaches more than one language					

skill in the same lesson					
--------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

**Tick (✓) the box that represents the degree of your agreement with each statement.**

<b>Part 3: Activities</b>					
1- Achieve the objectives					
2- Include clear instructions					
3- Encourage learner autonomy					
4 - Encourage cooperative learning					
5- Are linked to learners' prior knowledge and experiences					
6- Are varied in terms of type: dialogues, games, puzzles, matching, Cloze, questions, etc.					
7- Use various grouping patterns: individual, pairs, groups, and whole class					
8- Take individual differences into account					
9- Encourage using other learning resources					
10- Make use of new technology					
11- Build life skills and social values					
12- Encourage learners to apply the new knowledge in real life					
<b>Part 4: Assessment</b>					
1- Measures the achievement of the objectives					
2- Uses formative and summative assessment					
3- Uses various assessment methods (self, peer,					

and teacher)					
4- Uses various assessment tools (projects, questions, role play)					
5- Takes individual differences into account					
6- Measures higher-order thinking skills and strategies (prediction, analysis, synthesis, etc)					
<b>Part 5: Layout/Design</b>					
1- Pictures and drawings are clear					
2- Font type and size are legible (easy to read)					
3- Format (e.g., illustrations, organization, layout) adequately presents the content					
4- Format (e.g., illustrations, organization, layout) suits the age of students.					
5- Format (e.g., illustrations, organization, layout) makes the content motivating to learn					
6- The book has a strong cover and good paper quality					

**Part 6: Listening Skill**

Please answer the following question as elaborate as you can. Explain and mention page numbers when applicable. Give examples and **suggestions**.

What do you think of the type, amount, length, and complexity of **listening**?

**Type:**

**Amount:**

**Length:**

**Complexity:**

### **Part 7: Speaking Skill**

Please answer the following question as elaborate as you can. Explain and mention page numbers when applicable. Give examples and **suggestions**.

What do you think of the type, amount, length, and complexity of **speaking** activities?

**Type:**

**Amount:**

**Length:**

**Complexity:**

### **Part 8: Reading Skill**

Please answer the following question as elaborate as you can. Explain and mention page numbers when applicable. Give examples and **suggestions**.

What do you think of the type, amount, length, and complexity of **reading**?

**Type:**

**Amount:**

**Length:**

**Complexity:**

**Part 9: Writing Skill**

Please answer the following question as elaborate as you can. Explain and mention page numbers when applicable. Give examples and **suggestions**.

What do you think of the type, amount, length, and complexity of **writing** activities?

**Type:**

**Amount:**

**Length:**

**Complexity:**

**Part 10: Grammar**

Please answer the following question as elaborate as you can. Explain and mention page numbers when applicable. Give examples and **suggestions**.

What do you think of the type, amount, length, and complexity of **grammar**?

**Type:**

**Amount:**

**Length:**

**Complexity:**

**Part 11: Vocabulary**

Please answer the following question as elaborate as you can. Explain and mention page numbers when applicable. Give examples and **suggestions**.

What do you think of the type, amount, length, and complexity of **vocabulary**?

**Type:**

**Amount:**

**Length:**

**Complexity:**

**SECOND: THE TEACHER'S BOOK**

**Tick (✓) the box that represents the degree of your agreement with each statement.**

<b>Analysis Criteria</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Specific Further Notes with Page Numbers</b>
1- Contains precise guidelines on how to use it					
2- Explains the concepts of learning, assessment, teacher and learner roles					
3- Presents the learning objectives for each step					
4- Suggests clear step-by-step lesson planning					
5- Suggests lesson plans that can be completed on time					
6- Suggests lesson plans that can be adapted to suit the students' level					
7 – Is flexible and encourages teachers to be creative and use their own ways of teaching.					



8- Integrates assessment within the learning process					
9- Promotes learner-centered approach					
10- Contains answer key to all exercises					
11- Includes a list of references and online resources					

**12.** What do you think of the Teacher’s Book? How useful is it to you? How often do you use it to prepare your lessons? Does it have enough/insufficient/too many details? Write any suggestions you may have to improve the Teacher’s Book for Grade 8

---

**THIRD: THE RESOURCE PACK**

<b>Analysis Criteria</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Specific Further Notes</b>
1. They help achieve the learning objectives.					
2. They are suitable for students’ level.					

3. They are useful for individual differences.					
4. The number is enough.					
5. They are easy to use.					
6. They are of good quality.					
7. The size of the reading cards is good.					

**Tick (✓) the box that represents the degree of your agreement with each statement.**

<b>8. Other Comments regarding Resource Pack:</b>

**FOURTH: ERRORS AND TYPOS**

**Describe any linguistic, factual and print errors. Indicate book name (CB/SB/TB/RP=Resource Pack), page number, and line number. Is it semester A or B?**

<b>N</b>	<b>CB,SB,TB, RP A or B</b>	<b>Page number</b>	<b>Line number</b>	<b>Linguistic, Factual, and Print Errors</b>


**d. Observation Discussion - Pre and Post Observation sheets**

**Pre-Observation discussion:**

1. How do you feel about the lesson you are going to teach today? Easy? Difficult? Long? Interesting? Boring? Etc.

-----

2. What are the main objectives of the lesson today? What do you hope your students will be able to do by the end of the lesson?

-----

3. What are the main language skills (Lis/Spk/Rd?Wr) or language elements (Grammar, Vocab, Pronunciation, etc) to be practiced today?

-----

4. Generally speaking, what do you think is the most motivating activity in today's lesson?

-----

5. Generally speaking, what do you think is the most challenging activity in today's lesson? If there is something challenging, how are you going to address it during the lesson?

-----

6. What teaching materials are you using today?

-----

7. How will you make sure that your students have achieved the objectives? What assessment tools will you be using?

-----

**Post-Observation discussion:**

1. Do you think you have achieved the objectives of the lesson? Have your students learned what they are supposed to learn?

-----

2. Which activity/or part of the lesson do you think students liked most? What is the reason do you think?

-----

3. Which activity/or part of the lesson do you think students found most difficult? What is the reason do you think?

-----

4. If you were to teach this lesson again, would you change anything or teach certain steps any differently? If yes, which what would you change, why, and how? If no, why not?

-----

5. Have you made any changes to the methodology (the way and the sequence of teaching the steps) prescribed in the Teacher's Book? Or, have you followed it exactly? Justify your answer in both cases.

-----

6. Have you used any other materials besides what's provided by the ministry of education (CB/SB/TB/RP/etc)? If yes, what and why? If no, why not?

-----

7. Imagine yourself a curriculum designer and has been asked to re-write this lesson to make more successful. How would you do that? What changes you would make and why?

-----

8. Do you have any comments on this lesson?

-----  
9. Do you have any general comments on the Grade 3 English language curriculum (CB/SB/TB/RP/Etc)?  
-----

10. What are the main challenges/difficulties you have in teaching the English language curriculum?

## Appendix B: An Example of an Evaluation Report

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### INTRODUCTION

This report falls within the work of the Curriculum Evaluation Department in the evaluation of the English language Textbooks. This year the Department has conducted a study on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade English textbooks (basic). This study aimed to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks (basic) to suggest appropriate

recommendations for the development process to be undertaken by the Department of Humanities. To achieve this goal, three instruments were used: a questionnaire, a content analysis, and interviews. The study was conducted with grade 8<sup>th</sup> Basic Education teachers in all educational regions for the School Year 2010-2011. The population consisted of all Omani teachers who teach grade eight Basic Education.

The statistical software program SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used to analyze the quantitative data. Frequencies and percentages were calculated to quantify the results. Teachers' answers to the open-ended questions, the interviews results, and content analysis were analyzed qualitatively.

The findings of the study showed that the textbooks have good and clear introduction for both teachers and students. The rationale and aims are good. The content of the textbooks was logically presented, varied in terms of topics, and accurate. The activities sufficiently achieved the objectives, and included clear instructions. The Teacher's Book was very good in terms of providing clear guidelines and explaining the concepts of learning and the teacher and learner's roles. Other strong areas of the textbooks concerned the improvement of the language skills of reading and listening.

However, the evaluation shows some drawbacks that need to be considered in developing the textbooks. The results of the study showed that the objectives of the textbooks were not realized by teachers because they are too general and not specified at the beginning of the lessons. Also, both teachers and evaluators agreed that the time allotted for teaching the textbooks' content was inadequate. The activities and assessment tasks did not take



individual differences into account enough. The reading texts in the students' books were too long and used difficult language. Also, the writing activities were of a limited type. Moreover, there was no balance in the distribution of the listening and grammar rules among the units. The Teacher's Book did not vary the techniques so as to deal with the individual differences among students.

In light of the findings, the study concluded with recommendations and suggestions for the improvement of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks.

## **METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

### **Introduction**

The study aimed to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks (basic). Then, suggesting appropriate recommendations for the development process that undertaken by the Department of Humanities.

For these reasons, a survey and interviews were conducted to elicit the views of a representative number of English language teachers in all regions. Also, a content analysis was carried out by two evaluators to measure the extent of agreement in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks.

The evaluation deals with five main domains of the textbooks. These are the objectives, content, activities, assessment, and the design of the textbooks. The data was subjected to

analysis through descriptive statistics. The frequencies and percentages were calculated to quantify the results. Also, the teachers' answers of the open-ended questions, the interviews results, and content analysis were analyzed qualitatively.

## **1.2 Population and Sample**

The study was conducted with Eighth Grade Basic Education teachers in all Educational Regions for the School Year 2010-2011. The population consisted of all Omani teachers who teach Eighth Grade Basic Education. The sample for the questionnaire of the study consisted of 130 teachers.

## **1.3 Instruments**

Three instruments were used for the purpose of the present study: a questionnaire, content analysis, and interviews. Following is a description of their purposes and contents:

### **1.3.1 Questionnaire:**

The questionnaire consisted of 60 items distributed over five main parts. The first part is about student's books which included (42 items) distributed over five domains: objectives, content, activities, assessment, and layout/design. The second part is about Teacher's Book which includes (11 items). The third part is devoted to evaluate the resource pack (7 items). The last two parts specified for the general comments/suggestions and errors/ typos. Moreover, the questionnaire included some open-ended questions that relate to the language skills; listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. The questionnaire asked teachers to weigh their

opinion of each statement using a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

### **1.3.2 Content analysis:**

The content analysis tool is mainly composed of the same domains and items of the questionnaire. The textbooks were analyzed by two evaluators from the Supervision and Curriculum Evaluation Departments in order to be able to measure the extent of agreement in identifying the strengths and weaknesses.

### **1.3.3 Interviews:**

The interview was designed to find out more information about teachers’ perceptions and any difficulties they face in the application of the textbooks. Therefore, the interviews consisted of different questions relating to different aspects of the textbooks.

## **1.4 Data Collection**

The following procedures were followed to collect the data:

**First;** the instruments were modified according to previous comments obtained from the field.

**Second;** the questionnaires were distributed to all educational regions with a prior arrangement with some English Supervisors.

**Third;** field visits were conducted in order to find out more about teachers’ perceptions and any difficulties they face in the textbooks.

**Fourth;** two evaluators conducted a content analysis for the intended textbooks.

**Finally,** the collected data were analyzed and interpreted for the purpose of writing the

present report and the final recommendations.

### **1.5 Data Analysis**

For the questionnaire, the means and standard deviations were calculated in order to find out teachers' perception regarding the textbooks. Also, the teachers' comments in the space provided, their responses in the interviews, and content analysis were analyzed qualitatively.

### **1.6 Limitations of the study**

There are two limitations to this study. First, although the questionnaires were distributed to all regions, the time was not enough for the researcher to visit all the regions to interview teachers. The second limitation concerns the evaluators of the textbooks, the analysis was done only by two evaluators from two departments; Curriculum Evaluation Department and Supervision Department.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **2.1. Results of the Questionnaire:**

The total means, standard deviations, and percentages of each of the main parts of the questionnaire were computed. In addition, the researcher interpreted the results of the study. A three-level scale proposed by Oxford (1990) is adapted for the identification of the degree of **teachers' agreement** to the textbooks' domains. The three-level scale includes:

- Mean values (3.50 – 5.00) = of **high** agreement

- Mean values (2.50 – 3.40) = of **moderate** agreement
- Mean values less than (2.40) = of **low** agreement

<b>Degree of Agreement</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>St. deviat</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Domains</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Moderate	68	.6	2.72	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>4</b>
Low	6	.7	2.41	<b>Content</b>	<b>5</b>
Moderate	72	.6	2.89	<b>Activities</b>	<b>2</b>
Moderate	70	.6	2.80	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>3</b>
Moderate	75	.7	2.98	<b>Layout/design</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Moderate</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>.6</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>Total</b>	

As indicated in table 1, the general findings of the study showed that the degree of evaluation of 8<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks was “moderate”. The results indicated that the rank order of evaluation domains was as follows; **Layout/design**, **Activities**, **Assessment**, **Objectives**, and **Content** domain respectively.

The highest mean score was obtained by the fifth domain of the textbook “Layout/design” with a mean score of (2.98). Then, the third domain “Activities” came second with a mean score of (2.89). The lowest mean score was obtained by “Content” domain with a mean score of (2.41).

Regarding the Teacher’s Book and the Resources Pack, the findings of the study showed that the degree of evaluation of 8<sup>th</sup> grade Teacher’s Book and the resources

pack was also “moderate”. The following table summarizes the results:

<b>Degree of Agreement</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>St. deviation</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Domains</b>
Moderate	67	.7	2.67	Teacher’s Book
Moderate	71	.6	2.84	resources pack

The in-depth analysis of *teachers’ responses and their comments* to all items of the questionnaire revealed that the 8<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks have many positive aspects in many domains that have been evaluated. On the other hand, the textbooks have

the following drawbacks from teachers’ perspectives:

### **2.1.1 Objectives:**

Analysis of teachers’ responses and their comments revealed the following:

1. Teachers think that objectives are not appropriate to learners' level. They attributed this in their comments to the fact that students have different needs and they differ in developmental levels, ability, achievement levels, interests and learning modalities.
2. Teachers think that objectives are not measureable. They mentioned that objectives are broad and wide-range, that are difficult to measure. Some teachers indicated also that the verbs used in the objectives are particularly vague which make some of these objectives

difficult to measure.

3. Teachers think that objectives are not clear. Objectives are stated for each unit but not for lessons. This requires the teachers to draw objectives for their lessons from the general objectives. This may cause difficulty for some of them, especially new teachers, and may lead to significant differences between the teachers in terms of implementing the lessons, which may not necessarily be in the positive direction.

### **2.1.2 Content:**

Regarding the content, teachers think that content:

1. Doesn't suit the time allotted. They think that the content of the book is heavy when compared to the teaching period of each semester. The teachers mentioned that all skills and activities being taught in the textbook need more time to deal with them more effectively.

2. Also, they think that content is not appropriate to learners' level. They attributed this to the fact that the content did not take into account the real level of the students.

### **2.1.3 Activities:**

1. Teachers' responses and comments showed that activities do not take individual differences into account. They indicated that the activities ignored students' individual differences; such as differences in their levels, their attitudes about teaching and learning, and their learning style

#### **2.1.4 Teacher's Book:**

Regarding the Teacher's Book, the analysis of teachers' responses and their comments revealed the following:

1. The suggested lessons' plans can't be completed on time. This confirms what was mentioned before about content and objectives.
2. The suggested lessons' plans can't be adapted to suit the students' level. The teachers attributed this to the large number of details provided for the teachers.
3. The Teacher's Book doesn't include a list of references and online resources. They believe that some suggested references can help them to vary their teaching by using different strategies.
4. The Teacher's Book is not flexible enough and doesn't encourage them to be creative and use their own methods of teaching

Moreover, teachers were asked in the open-ended questions to elaborate more about the (type, amount, length, and complexity) of the language skills in the books. The following points summarize their comments:

#### **2.1.5 Listening:**

1. Teachers mentioned that listening texts are too long. Therefore, students easily forget



what they have heard and get confused.

2. Listening texts do not consider individual differences, therefore weak and average students find it difficult and they prefer the teacher to repeat the texts to them.

3. Listening texts are not varied in terms of voices, intonation, etc.

### **2.1.6 Speaking:**

1. Teachers mentioned that speaking tasks are not enough. The suggested tasks focused only on asking and answering questions, so there is no real communication.

1. Teachers think that the suggested speaking tasks do not suit learners' level because the topics are not authentic and not appropriate to their age.

### **2.1.7 Reading:**

1. Teachers pointed out that the reading tasks are complex and extensive. They think that students still have problems in word decoding and phonics which prevent them from reading complex texts.

2. Many reading tasks are too long. They mentioned that students have weak vocabulary at this level, which causes comprehension difficulties.

3. Not enough time is devoted for pre-reading tasks to prepare students for reading. The reading time is also seemed to be limited.

### **2.1.8 Writing:**

1. Teachers think that writing tasks are not enough to develop writing skills. According to them, most of devoted tasks to writing do not allow students to practice various types of writing.

2. The textbooks totally ignored the 'Guided writing', so it just considers the good students. Writing instructions are generally related to free writing tasks which do not help weak students.

3. The writing tasks are not related enough to the assessment. Teachers insisted that writing tasks and assessment tests should be linked to what students do in the classroom. Therefore, the writing tasks need to develop learners' test-taking strategies.

4. Not enough time is provided before writing to build up the language. Teachers asked for more time to build knowledge about writing, to negotiate the writing task or aspects of the writing task with students, and to model the writing process.

### **2.1.9 Grammar:**

1. Teachers pointed out that there is not enough examples and practice for suggested rules to enhance their retention. They mentioned that students need different types of explanations and practice, such as applying grammar rules into their writing.

2. No review is provided for the previous grammar rules to activate students' prior knowledge and reinforce their learning. According to the teachers, the review is

necessary to link the previous rules with new one to facilitate comprehension.

#### **2.1.10 Vocabulary:**

1. Teachers indicated that many items are complex and above students' level. Many texts often contain difficult language and unneeded vocabulary items which cause an additional burden for the teacher with lower-level students. Therefore, vocabulary should be appropriate to the students' level and consider their background knowledge.

2. Huge amount of vocabulary are provided. The teachers think that students should only taught the most frequently used words.

2. Vocabulary is not recycled. The teachers indicated that vocabulary items are taught once and not used later in other units, so students forget them easily.

#### **2.2. Results of the Interviews:**

The interviews with grade eight teachers revolved around the main domains of the textbooks (objectives, content, activities, assessment, and Layout/design) to find out more information about teachers' perceptions and difficulties. After analyzing teachers' answers, we got more evidence in support of the above mentioned findings obtained through the questionnaire. In other words, the analysis of teachers' interviews conforms to the statistical data yielded by questionnaires. The following points summarize their main comments:

The interviewed teachers pointed that:

1. The transition between class book and skills book causes confusion for students.  
The problem is that students usually require doing this more than once in each lesson.
2. Objectives are not clear. They should be specified at the beginning of the lessons.
3. The length of the units is not suitable compared to the time provided.
4. The layout of tasks in class book is confusing. Many tasks are squeezed in one page.
5. The layout of skills book also mixed up.
6. There is a gap between grade 7 and grade 8. The way of delivering the content is totally different.
7. No practice is given for the grammar rules that students already studied to link the studied rules with new rules.
8. Grammar rules are not integrated in the other skills. The other tasks that develop the other skills should use the same rule that presented in the unit.
9. Some rules are above students' level, (for example, past perfect continuous). This is one of the most difficult tenses.
10. Not enough writing tasks. Generally, there is no balance between the four skills.
11. A huge number of vocabulary items and they are not recycled in the textbook. So, each unit has a different number of vocabulary items.
12. No practice for spelling and punctuations.
13. Reading texts are too long and use very complex language. Therefore, they are difficult for students.
14. The *self-study activities* should be at the end of each unit NOT at the end of the course.

15. The *self-study activities* are useless. Students do not benefit because they are just copying the answers given on the same page.
16. *Unit reflection* is not useful because students are not able to express themselves.
17. Also, *club-talk* activities are not useful because they are not a real communication. In this activity students just match, copy, etc.
18. The course includes too much scientific information.
19. Students are not allowed to write in the class book, so they lose interest.
20. The **CDs** are easily damaged, so, better also provide **cassettes** with the CDs.

### **2.3. Results of the Content Analysis:**

As mentioned before the content analysis tool is mainly composed of the same domains and items of the questionnaire. The textbooks were analyzed by two evaluators to be able to measure the extent of consensus in identifying the strengths and weaknesses. From the analysis we can draw the following aspects of the agreement with the results of the teachers' questionnaire:

#### **2.3.1 Objectives:**

Content analysis shows that the objectives are stated for each unit, but there are no specific objectives for each lesson. There are sometimes about seven general objectives for the unit, while the teachers are required to prepare for fifteen lessons, each lesson contains five steps at least. This requires the teachers to show more than one specific objective for the lesson from the general objectives which may lead to significant differences between the teachers in term of stating the objectives and thus implementing the lesson.

Some objectives are too high to be accomplished by average students. It seems that the objectives do not address the individual differences among students. Therefore, objectives should consider all students and should help to ensure that students are practicing the right skills.

### **2.3.2 Content:**

The time allotted for teaching the content of 8<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks is inadequate. All skills and activities being taught in this textbook need more time to deal with them more effectively. This can be attributed to the fact that each unit contains more than three reading texts and more than two listening texts. This also applies to all other skills. Moreover, previous classroom observations revealed that teachers are not well trained to manage the time of their lessons efficiently.

### **2.3.3 Activities:**

It seems that the activities do not fit all students' abilities and interests because they are not varied and do not offer a diversity of approaches to meet students' individual differences. Also, textbooks' activities do not help students to feel at ease because not all students can cope with them.

### **2.3.4 Layout/Design:**

The design of the textbooks gives an impression that the designer was in hurry. It seems that there are a lot of mixed tasks in the class book as well as skills book. Many tasks are squeezed in one page and there is a mix of text and graphical materials on each page.

This means that teachers cannot use it effectively and students will face many difficulties as they try to use it for their own studies.

### **2.3.5 Teacher's Book:**

The Teacher's Book does not help teachers cater for mixed ability students and classes of different sizes. It doesn't consider the individual differences, nothing suggested as to how to adopt varied teaching strategies in order to cater to different class sizes and needs.

Also, it seems that the Teacher's Book is not flexible. It can't be exploited or modified as required by local circumstances, it is too rigid. In other words, it doesn't provide opportunity for teachers to modify activities.

Although the approach followed by Teacher's Book is student-centered, the suggested methods and procedures do not fit with this approach. The details and steps provided lead many teachers to talk (describing, instructing, etc) more than students.

### **2.3.6 Language Skills:**

#### **A. Listening:**

Listening is varied and includes different contexts and topics. However, listening texts are too long, which frustrating the students (e.g., Tape script 1.10 & TB (B) pg.3). It is true that Teacher's Book describes that it is not necessary to get students to understand every word they hear, but still students in this age can't sit and listen for long time because of their limited attention span.

Also, the listening texts are not distributed equally between the Units. Some units include more than 12 listening texts and others only 6 texts, e.g., (Unit 1 = 12 / Unit 2 = 6).

### **B. Speaking:**

It was found that there are different types of speaking activities like role playing and presentations but they are not sufficient. It seems that the textbooks did not address the speaking skill appropriately because it does not devote enough time to speaking activities. Also, the speaking activities are not daily at the end of each lesson.

### **C. Reading:**

It was found that the textbooks exposed students to varied types of reading texts. Also, it helps students to learn different reading strategies through “learning/Reading strategy” activities. However, it seems that reading texts are long and do not encourage students to read especially the low level students (e.g., “the wrong right inventor” p.27). Also, reading texts use difficult language which makes it very hard for students to comprehend the text properly.

### **D. Writing:**

It seems that the writing skill is given less weight than reading and listening. Writing activities are of a limited type and not adequate to achieve the objectives. The suggested writing activities are mostly sentence pattern drills instead of paragraph writing.

Although there are various types of writing including interactive and evaluative, but not enough attention is given to other types of writing; guided writing, shared writing, free



writing, etc.

It was found that the writing tasks were mixed with many other tasks in each lesson. So, not enough time is available for teachers to prepare their students and build their language before the actual writing.

### **E. Grammar:**

Different rules were presented in the textbooks. The amount is sufficient for students at this level. Also, the textbook provides students with references for grammar rules at the end. However, it is noticeable that the rules are not recycled throughout the units; it is only presented with some practice tasks and in the later units the students will encounter a new grammar rule.

Also, the rules are not distributed equally between the Units (e.g. SB-B, unit 3) includes; present perfect continuous, multi-word verbs, will and going to, and subject pronouns.

Moreover, it was found that no clear demonstrations of rules function are provided like (passive in SB-A p, 25). The activity does not measure students understanding of the rules.

### **F. Vocabulary:**

Although the textbooks develop a rich vocabulary, they are complex and prevent students from understanding the meaning. Also, lexical items are not recycled, each unit has its

own amount of vocabulary.

### 2.3.7 The Resource Pack:

The teaching aids were quite suitable since they can help to achieve the learning objectives. However, they need to be developed and increased to achieve students' independent learning.

### 2.4. Errors and Typos:

The questionnaire and the content analysis revealed that the textbook is not free of mistakes as well as miss-prints but they are few. The following tables summarized the linguistic, factual and print errors:

<b>Linguistic, Factual, and Print Errors</b>	<b>Line number</b>	<b>Page number</b>	<b>CB,SB,TB, RP A or</b>	<b>N</b>
Increase in human population (card 3) = It is (card 4)	Answers	7	TB-B	<b>1</b>
The Table: <b>are &amp; is = it is : is &amp; are</b>	-	64	SB- A	<b>2</b>
The answer given for number 2 SB 21 (A) in TB is (( <b>False</b> )) = It should be (( <b>True</b> ))	ACT 2	40	TB- A	<b>3</b>

( ...."You must <b>wear</b> sun cream /// ...." You must <b>put</b> Or <b>use</b> sun cream )	-	4	CB-B	<b>4</b>
<b>entertain</b> species = it should be <b>entertain</b> <u><b>people</b></u>	Act 2	18	SB- A	<b>5</b>
" <b>Al Seeb</b> international airport" = <b>Muscat</b> International airport	40	25	SB – B	<b>6</b>
Using ( <b>are</b> ) not for she, he, it	7	66	SB-B	<b>7</b>
Answer 5 is wrong. It should be ( <b>True</b> ) not( <b>False</b> )	Step 3	39	TB-A	<b>8</b>
Answer 4 is wrong. It should be ( <b>False</b> ) not( <b>True</b> )	Step 4	40	TB-A	<b>9</b>
Need be revised, not clear at all and some answers are wrong.	All steps	844040	TB-A SB- A	<b>10</b>
Answer 4 is wrong. It should be ( <b>False</b> ) not ( <b>True</b> )	Step 3	4	TB-B	<b>11</b>

Replacing the words ( <b>will</b> ) and ( <b>going to</b> ) in demonstrating the functions of two terms	12	28	SB- B	<b>12</b>
The answer is ( <b>some</b> ) not ( <b>any</b> )	Homework answers	34	TB-B	<b>13</b>
Picture a correspond text 2 and picture b correspond with text	Item 5	54	TB-B	<b>14</b>
Answers are not provided	-	44Step	TB-B	<b>15</b>

## RECOMMONDATIONS

The previous findings revealed that the level of 8<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks was good to some extent, and there are many positive indicators in most of the domains that have been evaluated. In light of the findings of this study, this report puts forward the following recommendations; which will hopefully be taken into consideration by the material producers and the curriculum designers:

### Objectives

1- The objectives need to be specified for each lesson instead of providing general objectives at the beginning of each unit. The textbooks' objectives must be explicit to which it be measurable.

2. The objectives should consider students' different needs, levels, abilities, interests and learning styles.
1. There should be a balance between the objectives, the materials and the number of periods designed to convey the whole message to the students.

### **Content**

4. Reduce the content to fit the time allotted and the students' level. The number of units should be minimized so as to enable both teachers and students to cover the material effectively on time.

### **Activities**

5. The activities should take into account the students' individual differences. They should be more varied and more relevant to students' abilities, needs, and styles.
6. The usefulness of some activities needs to be reviewed because they did not satisfy teachers' expectations (e.g. *self-study* activities, *Unit reflection*, and *club-talk* activities).
7. More activities need to be added for review at the end of each unit to measure the extent of learning and to focus on important aspects.

### **Language Aspects**

8. Reduce the length of listening texts and simplify the language to enhance

comprehension and raise students' interest.

8. Listening texts should consider the students' individual differences. They should be more authentic as possible and accompanied by students' prior knowledge.
10. The textbooks should devote enough time and place for *speaking* and *writing* skills. The textbook should include a sufficient number of authentic topics that address speaking and writing skills.
11. The length and the language of the *reading texts* should take into account the actual time of teaching and students' level.
12. Specify adequate time for *pre-reading tasks* to help the teachers to prepare their students for reading. Thus, some advanced pre-reading strategies need to be suggested for teachers, such as predicting, advance organizer, K-W-L, etc.
13. Vary the teaching techniques so as to deal with the writing skills by considering the different types of writing (guided writing, shared writing, free writing, etc).
14. The textbooks should include more adequate tasks for practicing grammar rules.
15. Integrate the intended grammar rules when teaching the other skills to enhanced students' comprehension through real implementation.

16. There should be more balance in the distribution of the grammar rules among the units of the textbooks.

17. Reduce the amount of vocabulary to be more appropriate to the students' level. Also, the textbooks' vocabulary should be recycled in all units.

### **Teacher's Book**

18. The Teacher's Book should keep up with modern trends in teaching English as a foreign language. However, it needs to vary the teaching techniques to help teachers to deal with the individual differences among their students.

19. The Teacher's Book should provide teachers with alternative ways for teaching their lessons in order to meet students' abilities, needs, and styles.

20. The Teacher's Book should guide teachers to adopt varied teaching strategies in order to cater to different class sizes and needs.

21. The provided procedures of Teacher's Book should take into account the actual time of teaching.

22. Organize meetings OR workshops to discuss time management and how the teachers can distribute the time of their lessons efficiently.

## Appendix C: Phase 1 Data Collection Instrument

### Developing a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation

This study intends to answer the following question:

What elements should be included in the Curriculum Evaluation manual (framework)?

And how useful are they in an Omani context?

This interview will answer this specific question as Phase 1 of the research:

- Is there a need for developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation?

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Gender:</b>	
<b>Certificate/degree:</b>	
<b>No. Years in Education</b>	
<b>No. Years in Curriculum Evaluation</b>	
<b>Experiences</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

	Item	Yes/No	Comments
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1	Do you need a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
2	What do you need a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation for?		
3	Who should write a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation?		
4	Who should a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation be written for?		
5	What should a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation document cover?		

**Comments:**

## Appendix D: Phase 2 Data Collection Instruments

### Round 1: Interview Questions

#### **Developing a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation**

This study intends to answer the following question:

What elements should be included in Curriculum Evaluation manual (framework)? And how useful are they in an Omani context?

This interview will answer this specific question as Phase 2- Round 1 of the research:

- What elements of Curriculum Evaluation should be considered for the framework for Curriculum Evaluation?
- In what order should these elements be organised and why?

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Gender:</b>	
<b>Qualification:</b>	
<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Work place</b>	
<b>Years of experience in Curriculum field</b>	
<b>Years of experience in Education field</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

1. How important in developing a framework for Curriculum Evaluation is for Ministry of Education in Oman?
  - a. Who will it help?
  - b. What would be the effect of its absence?
  - c. Other aspects?
  
2. Who should it be written for?
  - a. Teachers
  - b. Students
  - c. Curriculum Officers
  - d. Policy makers
  - e. Others
  
3. What aspects should be covered within the framework?
  - a. Theoretical and practical issues related to curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation
  - b. Stakeholders roles and needs
  - c. Teacher training and professional development
  - d. Student assessment
  - e. Aims, objectives, and future direction
  - f. Ministry policy
  - g. Internal/external evaluation
  - h. Others

**Comments:**

## Round 2: Questionnaire

### *Developing a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation*

This study intends to answer the following question:

What elements should be included in Curriculum Evaluation manual (framework)? And how useful are they in an Omani context?

This questionnaire will answer this specific question as Phase 2, Round 2 of the research:

- What elements of Curriculum Evaluation should be considered for the framework for Curriculum Evaluation?

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

A. The following items are suggested by different experts. **How far do you agree with including them in the Framework for Curriculum Evaluation?**

Item	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Suggested Details
Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the						

Ministry of Education						
Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education						
Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education,						
Aims & Objectives (Goals)						
Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives (Standards)						
Stakeholders' needs and expectations						
Learning Outcomes						
Learning and Curriculum theories adopted- Syllabus Type						
Language Items						
Skills & Sub-skills						
Assessment						
Resources						

Teacher Training						
Textbooks & Materials						
Methods & Approaches						
Instruction Time						
Management & Evaluation						
Communication between different departments (Curriculum, assessment, training, supervision, teachers, .. etc. of English Language)						

B. You can add some more comments here regarding designing and developing the framework.

Comments:
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### Round 3: Questionnaire

#### Developing a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation

This study intends to answer the following question:

What elements should be included in a Curriculum Evaluation manual (framework)? And how useful are they in an Omani context?

This questionnaire will answer this specific question as phase 2- round 3 of the research:

- What elements of Curriculum Evaluation should be considered for the framework for Curriculum Evaluation?
- In what order should these elements be organised and why?

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

Items	Suggested Order (Numbers 1-18)	Comments
Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education		
Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education		
Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education,		

Aims & Objectives (Goals)		
Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives (Standards)		
Stakeholders' needs and expectations		
Learning Outcomes		
Learning and Curriculum theories adopted- Syllabus Type		
Language Items		
Skills & Sub-skills		
Assessment		
Resources		
Teacher Training		
Textbooks & Materials		
Methods & Approaches		
Instruction Time		
Management & Evaluation		
Communication between different departments (Curriculum, assessment, training, supervision, teachers, .. etc. of English Language)		

**Comments:**



## Appendix E: Phase 3 Data Collection Instrument

### *Developing a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation*

Dear Participant

This study intends to answer the following question:

What elements should be included in an Evaluation framework? And how useful are they in an Omani context?

This questionnaire will answer this specific question as Phase 3 of the research:

- Are these standards elements suggested for the Curriculum Evaluation Framework useful for the Omani context?
- What improvement could be made to the framework after using (testing) it?

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Gender:</b>	
<b>Qualification:</b>	
<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Work place:</b>	
<b>Years of experience in the Curriculum field:</b>	
<b>Years of experience in the Education field:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

A. The following items were suggested by a number of experts, involved in the earlier part of the research, to be included in the framework for Curriculum Evaluation.

How useful are these for inclusion in the Curriculum Evaluation Framework?

- *Press the Ctrl key and click on the item to direct you to the text, Click on the 'Back' link to return to the items again.*

Items	Useful					Useless	Suggested changes/improvements
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education							
2. Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education							
3. Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education							
4. Stakeholders' needs and expectations							
5. Aims and learning objectives and outcomes General Learning Objectives							

Learning Outcomes						
Specific Learning Objectives						
6.Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives						
7.Methods & Approaches						
8.Textbooks & Materials						
9.Resources						
10.Instruction Time						
11.Assessment						
12.Teacher Training						
13.Management & Evaluation						

B. How far do you agree with the following statements?

Item	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
The content of the document covers all that is expected.					
The order of items of the framework is reasonable.					
The framework is useful for my					

working context.					
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C. General suggested changes/improvements

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## Appendix F: Phase 2: Round 1- Complete List of Elements

Elements	Details Suggested
Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education	The CE department Mission
Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education	The CE department Vision
Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education,	Rationale underlying teaching English
Aims & Objectives (Goals)	Goals Aims/Objectives
Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives	State the Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives
Stakeholders' needs and expectations	Parents, Employers, University requirements, others
Learning Outcomes	What should learners achieve by the end of the course
Learning and Curriculum theories adopted- Syllabus Type	Type of learning and curriculum theories adopted in the English curriculum Notional, functional, traditional, etc.



Language Items	Grammar, Vocabulary, etc.  (grammar, vocabulary, phonology and discourse)
Skills	four skills (Listening, speaking, reading and writing)
Assessment	Tests, quizzes, continuous assessment, etc.  The role of Curriculum Evaluation department to collect the students' assessment and Self-assessment task
Resources	Educational aids & technology
Teacher Training	In-service education sessions
Textbooks & Materials	Textbooks prepared in-house or imported, supplementary materials, worksheets, etc.  Scope and grading  Cultural aspect  Comprehensiveness  Matching the objectives  Activities covered and clearly described  Learning strategies and learning styles incorporated
Methods & Approaches	Roles of teachers & learners  The approaches-  The role of parents
Instruction Time	Teaching hours per week
Management & Evaluation	Means of implementation & funding- sample of

	<p>instruments</p> <p>Using different approaches such as questionnaires, interviews.- self-assessment tasks,</p> <p>A sheet need to be developed used by different levels</p> <p>Get feedback , take a move and an action, inform participants and then</p> <p>When u look at CE u need to check whether they have achieve the aims and the objectives sated out by the Ministry.</p>
<p>Communication between different departments (Curriculum, assessment, training, supervision, teachers, .. etc. of English Language)</p>	<p>Different departments, schools, teachers and students</p> <p>Use of technology and other resources</p>

## Appendix G: Suggested Corrections on the Framework

Section	Errors	Corrections
Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education	Continuous evaluation of Curriculum by conducting scientific-based field studies using various research principles and methods and involving different parties concerned with educational learning process, in order to obtain results high degree of validity and reliability which lead to realistic and effective recommendations to review the curriculum	Continuous evaluation of Curriculum by conducting scientific-based field studies using <i>various</i> research principles and methods and involving different parties concerned with <i>the</i> educational learning process, in order to obtain results <i>with</i> a high degree of validity and reliability which lead to realistic and effective recommendations to review the curriculum
Stakeholders' needs and expectations	(Paragraph 1) They also see the importance of teaching English as a means for communication and develop children' abilities to use it authentically - for example, filling in English forms and writing e-mails.  (Paragraph 2)From this standpoint, English is expected to be taught to	(Paragraph 1) They also see the importance of teaching English as a means for communication and <i>of</i> <i>developing</i> children' abilities to use it authentically - for example, by filling in English forms and writing e-mails.  (Paragraph 2)From this standpoint, English is expected to be taught to

	reach the expectations of society and parents	<i>meet</i> the expectations of society and parents
	(Paragraph 3) Job market, higher education institutes, parents and the society in general needs and expectation needs to be considered. In this case the level of English is concerned as well as other things	(Paragraph 3) <i>The expectations of employers, higher education institutes, parents and society in general need to be considered. In this case the level of English is involved</i> as well as other concerns
Aims and learning objectives and outcomes	Aims and learning objectives and outcomes	Aims and learning objectives and outcomes
	By the end of Post Basic Education, students should	By the end of Post Basic Education, students should:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain the functional command of English as a preparation for work or for further studies and as a means of communication with the outside world.</li> <li>• Develop and consolidate functional skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking.</li> <li>• Demonstrate strong moral</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>have a functional command of English as preparation for work or for further studies and as a means of communication with the outside world;</i></li> <li>• <i>have developed and consolidated</i> functional skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking;</li> <li>• demonstrate strong moral beliefs, principles, <i>behaviour</i></li> </ul>

- 
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>beliefs, principles, behavior and pride in their country, their Gulf heritage, and the Arab world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use English as a medium for learning about their culture as well other cultures,</li> <li>• valuing the diversity of the world's peoples, cultures, and ecosystems; and</li> <li>• Understanding and actively promoting equity, justice, peace, and the protection of the environment in their community, Oman, and the world.</li> <li>• Develop awareness of learning strategies and study skills and apply them to further their learning of English both inside and outside school and become more self-directed such as dictionary skills planning and organizational skills, and self-</li> </ul> | <p>and pride in their country, their Gulf heritage, and the Arab world;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>be able to use</i> English as a medium for learning about their <i>own</i> culture as well other cultures;</li> <li>• <i>value</i> the diversity of the world's peoples, cultures, and ecosystems;</li> <li>• <i>understand and actively promote</i> equity, justice, peace, and the protection of the environment in their community, Oman, and the world;</li> <li>• <i>have an</i> awareness of learning strategies and study skills and apply them to further their learning of English both inside and outside school and become more self-directed in the use of skills such as dictionary skills, planning and organizational</li> </ul> |
|--|---|
-

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monitoring skills.

- Acquire an active mastery of the core grammar of English.
- Establish a basis for both fluency and accuracy within specified domains.
- Use higher order thinking skills.

skills, and self-monitoring

skills;

- *have an active* mastery of the core grammar of English;
- *have a basis* for both fluency and accuracy within specified domains;
- use higher order thinking skills.

The general learning objectives (Grades 1 to 4)

The general learning objectives (Grades 1 to 4)

By the end of grade 4, Learners should be able to:

By the end of grade 4, Learners should:

- Create an interest and enjoyment in English language learning.

- *have an* interest and enjoyment in English language learning;

- Develop an awareness of English language as an instrument of communication.

- *have an* awareness of the English language as an instrument of communication;
  - *have an* awareness of how
-

- 
- Develop an awareness of how languages differ in sound and rhythm.
  - Develop an awareness that language operates as a rule-governed system.
  - Talk and write about themselves.
  - Develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.
  - Develop general learning and study skills.
  - Develop an awareness of the link between language and culture.
  - Develop a positive attitude towards other peoples and cultures.
  - Contribute to the development of their intellectual, social, emotional and physical skills.
  - Use English for communication inside and outside the
- languages differ in sound and rhythm;
  - have an* awareness that language operates as a rule-governed system;
  - be able to* talk and write about themselves;
  - have developed* listening, speaking, reading and writing skills;
  - have developed* general learning and study skills;
  - have an* awareness of the link between language and culture;
  - have a* positive attitude towards other peoples and cultures;
  - be able to* contribute to the development of their own intellectual, social, emotional and physical skills;
  - be able to* use English for communication inside and outside the classroom
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classroom.

The specific objectives for Grades 5-10- Writing using reference published materials appropriately

The specific objectives for Grades 5-10- Writing: *using references and other published materials appropriately.*

Specific Objectives for Grades 11&12-Critical Thinking Skills

Specific Objectives for Grades 11&12-Critical Thinking Skills

Critical thinking is integrated fully into the curriculum. Higher order thinking skills, such as clarification and inference, are explicitly taught in the two grades.

Critical thinking is integrated fully into the curriculum. Higher order thinking *skills, such as getting clarification and inferencing, are explicitly taught in the two grades.*

Linguistic and Non-linguistic Objectives  
Non-linguistic Attitudes and Motivation, line 8

Non-linguistic objectives- Attitudes and Motivation, line 8

Pacing the entry of new items also play an important role in determining the difficult level of materials: if materials are too difficult or challenging, students' motivation to learn is affected

Pacing the entry of new items also plays an important role in determining *the level of difficulty of materials*: if materials are too difficult or challenging, students' motivation to learn is affected

Textbooks & Materials  
Components of the English Language Curriculum-Post-Basic:

Components of the English Language Curriculum-Post-Basic:



	<p>Grades 11-12(Engage with English)</p>	<p>Grades 11-12(Engage with English)</p>
	<p>Skills Books/Workbooks</p> <p>The English for Me Skills Book is designed to introduce children to English in their early years to writing patterns, directionality, the English alphabet and English numbers, with the eventual outcome of writing in the English language using both printed and cursive script</p>	<p>Skills Books/Workbooks</p> <p>The English for Me Skills Book is designed to introduce children to English in <i>their early years. They are introduced to writing patterns, directionality, the English alphabet and English numbers, with the eventual outcome of writing in the English language using both printed and cursive script</i></p>
<p>Management &amp; Evaluation</p>	<p>Who should be involved? Line 23</p> <p>If the evaluator fails to gain corporation and interest of the staff by meeting them and showing the need and the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluation cannot be successful.</p> <p>Gathering the information: Action research as a tool for Curriculum</p>	<p>Who should be involved? Line 23</p> <p>If <i>the evaluator fails to gain the co-operation and interest of the staff by meeting them and showing the need and the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluation cannot be successful.</i></p> <p>Gathering the information: Action research as a tool for Curriculum</p>

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Evaluation:

Evaluation:

Action research is defined as explore a problem with the aim of finding a solution to the problem (Creswell, 2008)

Action research is defined as *a way* to explore a problem with the aim of finding a solution to the problem (Creswell, 2008).

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## **Appendix H: The English Language Curriculum Evaluation Framework**

### **Introduction**

This document describes the English Language Curriculum Evaluation for government schools in the Sultanate of Oman. It highlights different issues related to English Teaching in Oman by providing a background for educators and other policy makers to assist in decision making regarding the future development of the English Language Curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation.

The purpose of this document is to:

- provide a rationale for English Language Curriculum development in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Highlight the vision and the mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education.
- Highlight the importance of considering different stakeholders including parents, job market and higher education institutions.
- Outline the aims and objectives of the English Language Curriculum in the Basic and Post-Basic Education systems.
- Present the learning outcomes of different levels and grades
- Outline the progression and continuity in the development of linguistic and non-linguistic skills and concepts in the English Language Curriculum from grades 1 to 12.
- Present different methodological approaches utilized within the English Curriculum
- Highlight different resources which can be used.
- Outline the number of periods for each grade of the English Curriculum.

- Highlight the assessment weighting scale of each skill for each grade
- Show a short description of the main teacher training programmes and projects.
- Outline the Curriculum Evaluation issues and samples of the data collection methods used.
- Outline the need to develop a clear link among different departments and the practitioners in the classroom.

The English teaching context need to have clear standards to help planners at a higher level, training, curriculum, supervision and assessment officers. This would also help practitioners in the field such as teachers to know what they are expected to do and methods used to check what is being covered. It would also help the whole nation such as parents to know what has been covered and what kind of support they need to offer. This supports the need to have and develop a public framework for Curriculum Evaluation.

The Educational system in Oman is called “Basic Education” which includes Cycle 1 (Grades 1-4) and Cycle 2 (Grades 5-10). This is followed by Grades 11 and 12 which are called “Post-Basic Education”. In grade 12 which is the last grade in the system, students sit National Exams in different subjects of which English is one. Based on their results- the results are in form of letter grades not marks- they can apply to different fields of study in and outside the country’s colleges and universities, both governmental and private.

### **Definitions of Terms**

Curriculum includes all the materials used for a teaching context such as the course book , teacher's book (notes), teacher's work, students' work, teaching aids and what the teacher and learners bring to the classroom in order to facilitate and help teachers to teach and

learners to learn (Cunningsworth, 1995; Tomlinson, 2001; McGrath, 2002: 7 in Al-Jardani, 2012b)

Curriculum Evaluation can be defined as a systematic process of collecting and analyzing all relevant information for the purpose of judging and assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum to promote improvement (Nichols, et al. 2006; Marsh, 2004: 106 , Brown, 1995: 218 and Al-Jardani, 2012b).

### **Rationale and Policy of the Ministry of Education**

The Sultanate of Oman faces the challenge of preparing its youth for life and work in the new conditions created by the modern global economy. These conditions require a high degree of adaptability and a strong background in maths, science, technology and languages in order to deal with rapidly changing technologies and developing international business opportunities.

The English Language Curriculum is designed to provide students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes that Oman's youth need to succeed in this rapidly changing society.

The English Language Curriculum reflects planned and ongoing changes across the social and educational spectrum, which has an undeniable impact on the future of language teaching in Oman. These include changes in:

- educational philosophy;
- the role of English in society (tourism, business, etc.)
- students' and parents' expectations;
- an increased level of student awareness in terms of knowledge of the outside world;

- student awareness in regard to transliteracy
- educational technology.

The curriculum (with its approach, and objectives) for the teaching of English, as well as approaches to teacher training and learner assessment, therefore reflect:

- expectations for higher levels of achievement from the school programme;
- acknowledgement of learner-centred methodology;
- less dependence on transmission-oriented modes of teaching;
- less dependence on textbooks as the primary source of teaching and learning;
- less emphasis on a linguistic 'product' as the outcome of every lesson;
- greater emphasis on the role of English in continuing technological and economic development, and promoting world knowledge.

In light of the above considerations, the following content domains are used as the basis for developing general objectives for the 12-year English Curriculum. Two different types of objectives are needed: those which address language learning, and those which address socio-cultural and attitudinal dimensions of learning. Linguistic objectives are recommended in the domains of vocabulary, grammar, and other linguistic skills, as well as non-linguistic objectives related to culture, learning strategies, attitudes and motivation.

### **Vision of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education:**

Continuous evaluation and development of the curriculum to reach the best international standards to ensure achieving learning outcomes which are able to contribute effectively in building the Omani society, considering the educational policies of the Ministry, the requirements of the labor market, and the preservation of the nature of Omani society and national identity.

## **Mission of the Curriculum Evaluation in the Ministry of Education**

Continuous evaluation of Curriculum by conducting scientific-based field studies using various research principles and methods and involving different parties concerned with the educational learning process, in order to obtain results with a high degree of validity and reliability which lead to realistic and effective recommendations to review the curriculum.

## **Stakeholders' needs and expectations**

English in Oman is seen as an important foreign language. It is utilized in both government and private organizations. However, it is used more in private associations, as they are linked more closely to international organizations. From this perspective, people in Omani society see the need to focus more on how English is taught in classrooms. They also see the importance of teaching English as a means for communication and of developing children' abilities to use it authentically - for example, by filling in English forms and writing e-mails. Parents see the target language importance for their children as a tool or as a gate to the future. They spend their time, effort and money to help their children to learn English fast and effectively. They sometimes send their children to private institutes during holidays to have English and computers courses.

From this standpoint, English is expected to be taught to meet the expectations of society and parents. These expectations lead to a focus on the use of the target language. They mainly focus, as the researcher sees it, on the production skills, as parents are keen to see their children write and talk well.

The expectations of employers, higher education institutes, parents and society in general need to be considered. In this case the level of English is involved as well as other

concerns. There is a need to develop some research on the needs and expectations of all of these parties.

### **Aims and learning objectives and outcomes**

By the end of Post Basic Education, students should:

- have a functional command of English as preparation for work or for further studies and as a means of communication with the outside world;
- have developed and consolidated functional skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking;
- demonstrate strong moral beliefs, principles, behaviour and pride in their country, their Gulf heritage, and the Arab world;
- be able to use English as a medium for learning about their own culture as well other cultures;
- value the diversity of the world's peoples, cultures, and ecosystems;
- understand and actively promote equity, justice, peace, and the protection of the environment in their community, Oman, and the world;
- have an awareness of learning strategies and study skills and apply them to further their learning of English both inside and outside school and become more self-directed in the use of skills such as dictionary skills, planning and organizational skills, and self-monitoring skills;
- have an active mastery of the core grammar of English;
- have a basis for both fluency and accuracy within specified domains;
- use higher order thinking skills.



### The General Learning Objectives

#### a. The general learning objectives for Grades 1 to 4

By the end of grade 4, Learners should:

- have an interest and enjoyment in English language learning;
- have an awareness of the English language as an instrument of communication;
- have an awareness of how languages differ in sound and rhythm;
- have an awareness that language operates as a rule-governed system;
- be able to talk and write about themselves;
- have developed listening, speaking, reading and writing skills;
- have developed general learning and study skills;
- have an awareness of the link between language and culture;
- have a positive attitude towards other peoples and cultures;
- be able to contribute to the development of their own intellectual, social, emotional and physical skills;
- be able to use English for communication inside and outside the classroom.

#### b. The general learning objectives (Grades 5-10)

Learners should be able to:

- maintain interest and enjoyment in learning English.
- contribute to the development of their linguistic, intellectual, social, emotional and physical skills.

- develop fluency and accuracy within specified functional areas covering both interactional and transactional uses of the English language.
- develop systematic knowledge and use of pronunciation, intonation and stress patterns in spoken English.
- develop realistic purposes for listening, including interactional and transactional listening, listening for pleasure and listening for information.
- gradually progress from listening to simple texts to more complex, and from scripted to authentic and semi-authentic listening sources.
- develop realistic purposes for reading with natural texts being used as well as a variety of text types.
- display clear development from the mechanics of writing to producing more complex texts using a variety of composing processes.
- acquire active mastery of 2,500 English words and a recognition vocabulary of an additional 2,000 words.
- develop an understanding of how the language operates, rather than memorising grammar rules.
- use grammar as a problem solving activity by being guided to work out the rules of grammar for themselves.
- develop critical thinking skills.
- use English as a means of communication.

Overall, the English Language Curriculum aims to develop:

1. Listening skills
2. Speaking skills
3. Reading skills

4. Writing skills
5. Grammatical accuracy
6. Positive attitudes towards English language learning
7. Independent and collaborative learning skills

c. The general learning objectives for Grades 11&12

Learners should be able to:

- develop oral fluency and accuracy within specified functional areas and with acceptable standards of pronunciation.
- develop realistic purposes for listening, covering interactional and transactional listening, as well as listening for both information and pleasure.
- develop reading skills using naturalist texts and a variety of text types.
- develop purposeful and practical writing skills by focusing on the processes involved in writing with a balance between fluency-based and accuracy-based tasks.
- use grammar in clear contexts with a balance of inductive and deductive tasks.
- acquire vocabulary through exposure to a wide variety of reading texts and to ensure that students are exposed to high frequency vocabulary.
- make receptive vocabulary productive through the process of spiralling or recycling.
- develop self-help strategies, including the appropriate use of a range of resources for independent learning and reflection and monitoring strategies.
- develop critical and higher order thinking skills, such as clarification and inference etc.
- develop study skills such as dictionary skills, library and research skills, paraphrasing, referencing and accurate citation of sources, whilst avoiding plagiarism.

The Learning Outcomes

a. The learning outcomes for Grades 1-4

Learners can:

Skill	Grade 1	Grade 4
Listening	Understanding words & phrases	Understanding texts of different kinds
Speaking	Making simple statements; asking & answering questions	Producing spoken texts of different kinds and taking part in (more complex) interactions
Reading	Recognising letters and associating them with sounds	Understanding texts of different kinds
Writing	Writing numbers and the letters of the alphabet	Writing short texts of different kinds

b. The learning outcomes for Grades 5-10

Skill	Grades 5 &6	Grade 7-10
Listening:	Can understand spoken texts	Can understand a variety of spoken texts
Speaking	Can give (short) presentations Can interact with others	Can give (longer) presentations Can interact with others
Reading	Can understand written texts Can read independently	Can understand a variety of written texts

		Can read independently
Writing	Can write sentences Can write short texts	Can write and respond to letters and e-mails. ( <i>Interactive</i> )  Can write texts with the purpose of providing information. ( <i>Informative</i> )  Can write stories and narrate events in the past. ( <i>Narrative</i> )  Can write texts which express and justify opinions. ( <i>Evaluative</i> )
GRM/ VCB	Can understand and use grammar and vocabulary.	Can understand and use grammar and vocabulary

c. Learning outcomes for Grades 11&12

Skill	Grades 11 &12
Listening	Can understand a variety of spoken texts
Speaking	Can give presentations Can interact with others
Reading	Can understand a variety of written texts Can read independently
Writing	Can write and respond to letters and e-mails. ( <i>Interactive</i> )  Can write texts with the purpose of providing

	<p>information. (<i>Informative</i>)</p> <p>Can write stories and narrate events in the past. (<i>Narrative</i>)</p> <p>Can write texts which express and justify opinions. (<i>Evaluative</i>)</p>
GRM/ VCB	Can understand and use grammar and vocabulary.

### The Specific Objectives

- a. The specific objectives for Grades 1–4

#### Listening

Students should be able to:

- Recognise the sound system of English and distinguish its phonemes.
- Understand and respond to instructions and personal questions given by the teacher.
- Understand information relating to self, and the immediate environment of home and school.
- Grasp the general meaning of more extended oral texts from different sources (audio cassettes, computer programmes, teacher and classmates).
- Extract specific information from an oral text and transfer it to a different medium (drawings, diagrams, maps, etc.).
- Use simple comprehension strategies to overcome difficulties of understanding.
- Understand linguistic conventions used by native speakers in different communicative situations, e.g. to tell a story, to express feeling, to describe a film.

## Speaking

Students should be able to:

- Ask and answer simple personal questions.
- Make short personal statements.
- Use familiar English phrases in the real context of everyday classroom situations.
- Use English phrases in controlled communicative situations.
- Reproduce aspects of the intonation and rhythm of the language using songs, chants, and listening to texts as models for imitation.
- Use verbal and non-verbal communication (gesture, body language, etc.).

## Reading and writing

Students should be able to:

- Recognise letter sounds and shapes and form letters.
- Recognise the written form of words already mastered orally.
- Read phrases with supporting visuals.
- Write words and phrases to accompany visuals.
- Grasp the overall meaning of short written texts, and to extract specific information from them.
- Transfer information contained in written texts to pictures, charts, maps, etc.
- Give and request information by means of messages to friends, questionnaires, instructions, etc.
- Write short texts under the teacher's guidance, given a model.

- Recognise and use punctuation and other conventions of the written language.

In addition to the linguistic objectives, there are also a range of non-linguistic objectives embedded in the curriculum.

### Shared Reading

There are a number of Big Books that accompany the curriculum for grades 1-4, and are introduced through shared reading. Children enjoy listening to stories and understand the conventions of narrative. Stories are motivating, fun and help develop positive attitudes and can create a desire to continue learning. Listening to stories in a class is a social experience as storytelling involves a shared response of laughter, sadness, excitement, anticipation and a sense of right and wrong. All these aspects assist in building confidence and encouraging social and emotional development. Listening to and reading stories allow the teacher to introduce or revise vocabulary and structures that will expose children to language, which will enrich their thinking and gradually become part of their own speech. Stories also provide ideal opportunities for presenting cultural information and encouraging cross-cultural comparisons, as well as creating tolerance for people from other cultures.

Shared reading provides the opportunity for the teacher and the children to read a text together with the aim of supporting literacy development. By sharing the reading of a text, children can develop an awareness of how words carry meaning, where to start reading, English directionality, story structure and the pleasure that reading can bring. Teachers can also model a range of effective reading strategies, from top-down strategies such as guessing and predicting meanings from pictures and context, to bottom-up strategies like sounding out difficult words. Children see the words as they are being said, and by taking



part in the reading through the repeated chunks of language, they are able to develop their confidence and motivation to read texts themselves.

b. The specific objectives for Grades 5-10

### Listening

Students should be able to:

- Understand everyday spoken language.
- Understand general meaning.
- Identify main points.
- Understand the language intonation by listening to native speakers.
- Extract specific information related to:
  - intonation and stress patterns
  - key vocabulary
  - informal interactional conversations
  - more complex instructions
  - questions and requests
  - complex descriptions
  - longer narratives
  - presentations and monologues
  - speakers' opinions, attitude, feelings and intentions
  - a variety of discourse markers
  - a variety of cohesive devices

### Speaking

Students should be able to:

- Communicate with individuals and small groups.
- Communicate with larger audience.
- Take part in a variety of interactions of increasing length and complexity by:
  - expressing opinions
  - giving presentations using key vocabulary
  - responding appropriately to a variety of requests
  - giving a variety of instructions and commands
  - giving a variety of descriptions
  - asking and answering questions
  - telling narratives
  - talking about processes
  - making suggestions and offers
  - using grammar and vocabulary appropriately
  - organizing ideas and information coherently
  - using discourse markers appropriately
  - using intonations and stress patterns
  - talking about language learning using metalanguage
  - noticing and repairing misunderstandings

## Reading

Students should be able to:

- Understand general meaning.
- Identify main points.

- Extract specific information.
- Tackle extended texts with increasing confidence and understanding by:
  - sight reading content words
  - getting meaning from text using a variety of top-down strategies
  - recognizing and understanding punctuation
  - reading sentences (statements, questions, instructions, etc).
  - reading a variety of texts (descriptions, stories, processes, dialogues, etc)
  - reading a variety of non-linear texts (graphs, charts, maps, diagrams)
  - rereading and checking their own writing (spelling, punctuation, word selection)
  - Reading faster

## Writing

Students should be able to:

Produce a variety of texts by:

- writing fast using cursive scripts and a personal style
- applying a variety of spelling strategies
- writing a variety of interactive texts (e.g. letters, e-mails, notes, invitations, etc)
- writing a variety of informative texts (e.g. article, reports, CVs, instructions, questionnaires, forms, descriptions, etc.)
- writing a variety of narratives (e.g. account of life experiences, fictional narratives, biographies and historical texts)
- writing a variety of evaluative texts (e.g. rules, articles, advice, complaints, etc.)
- planning and organizing ideas coherently
- using punctuation appropriately (e.g. speech marks, apostrophes, commas)

- using grammar and language patterns appropriately
- writing cohesively (e.g. conjunctions, pronouns, sequencers)
- recording information in a variety of ways (charts, graphs, lists, diagrams)
- revising and editing their own writing
- using references and other published materials appropriately.

### Independent and collaborative learning skills

Students should be able to:

- Take turns appropriately in social activities.
- Establish routines for working at home.
- Reflect on and assess own learning achievements.
- Recognize own learning style.
- Access and use reference material (e.g. dictionary, glossary, thesaurus).
- Synthesize and reword published texts.
- Acknowledge authors rights and avoid plagiarism.
- Plan learning and meet deadlines.
- Identify and talk about patterns and language structures.
- Apply prior knowledge.
- Transfer information from one source to another

In addition to the linguistic objectives, there are also a range of non-linguistic objectives embedded in the curriculum.

Self-study pages:

The curriculum for grades 8-10 also provides a framework of core materials, which can be extended in different ways in order to cater for early finishers. The self-study activities at the back of the skills book offer opportunities for further practice and reinforcement of the work done in particular units. Students who finish activities before others can be guided to extend their work in a particular area. Alternatively, students can be encouraged to work on these activities independently in their own time. There is an accompanying self-check answer key that students can use to check their own work.

### Club Corner Magazine

In grades 8-10, the final unit studied each term is called *Club Corner* and is different from the previous four units. It can be taught as a fifth unit at the end of the semester or parts of it can be used throughout the semester at the teacher's discretion. In the Club Corner unit, there is a series of 10 independent lessons that you can either teach sequentially or select according to students' needs. This unit also aims to provide students with opportunities to extend their learning independently.

*Club Corner* has been designed in the form of a magazine in order to contextualize language and skills already encountered in units 1-4. The Skills Book consists of up to two core activities that have to be completed. There are additional activities, called independent tasks, which aim to give flexibility and choice. Some independent tasks build upon core activities.

Independent tasks may take several lessons to complete and do not need to be followed sequentially. Students can do the independent tasks in their exercise book or on a piece of paper. The independent tasks can be used in a variety of ways:

- Student preference: Students choose one or more of the tasks to follow independently with the support of the teacher.
- Rotation: Teacher assigns different tasks to different groups and rotates tasks so that all students have an opportunity to do all of the tasks.

c. Specific Objectives for Grades 11&12

## Reading

Learners should be able to:

- Read a variety of text types articles of various types of genres such as:
  - magazine articles
  - short stories
  - newspaper articles
  - instructions
  - rules
  - informational texts
  - e-mails
  - charts
  - notes
- Select appropriate reading strategies when reading for different purposes by:
  - previewing and predicting
  - generating focus questions
  - reading for specific information (scanning)
  - reading for main ideas (skimming)
  - guessing meaning from context

- Use strategies to improve reading speed and effectiveness.
- Make effective use of dictionaries.

## Listening

Students should be able to:

- Understand and respond to extensive and complex listening texts:
  - monologues
  - dialogues
- Understand and respond to different types of discourse:
  - conversation
  - narratives
  - descriptions
  - academic lectures
  - interviews
- Select appropriate listening strategies when listening for different purposes by:
  - previewing and predicting
  - generating focus questions
  - listening for specific information
  - listening for gist
  - guessing meaning from context

## Speaking

Students should be able to:

- Improve their communicative fluency and accuracy.

- Initiate and take part in different types of spoken discourse:
  - conversation
  - transactional discourse
  - discussions
  - presentations
- Recognize and produce common idiomatic and conversational expressions.
- Use functional language to carry out practical transactions in everyday life by:
  - asking for and giving information
  - giving an opinion
  - disagreeing with an opinion
  - making suggestions
  - clarifying information
- Use English for social communication.
- Monitor own speech for accuracy and appropriateness.

## Writing

Students should be able to:

- Improve their fluency and accuracy in writing a variety of texts.
- Employ strategies appropriate to the different stages of the writing process:
  - taking notes from written and oral sources
  - planning, organizing and writing outlines
  - writing drafts
  - revising
  - editing and proofreading



- Use higher-order organizational skills in writing.
- Compose original written texts in a variety of genres:
  - academic essays
  - compare and contrast essays
  - cause and effect essays
  - pros and cons essays
  - summaries
  - formal letters
  - informal letters
  - biographies
  - narratives
  - advertising proposals
  - postcards
  - academic reports
- Use knowledge of textual cohesion:
  - conjunctions
  - pronoun reference

## Learning and Social Skills

Students should be able to:

- Co-operate with others in pairs and group work.
- Demonstrate the ability to work independently.

- Sequence events and processes.
- Compare and contrast information.
- Apply prior knowledge.
- Classify and categorize given information.
- Rank, list and order given information.
- Monitor and reflect on their own learning.
- Infer meaning from context.
- Reason deductively and inductively.

In addition to the linguistic objectives, there are also a range of non-linguistic objectives embedded in the curriculum.

### Learning Strategies

Developing lifelong, independent learning strategies is an important objective of the curriculum. The learning materials provide opportunities for students to become familiar with self-help strategies, the appropriate use of a range of resources for independent learning, and reflection and monitoring strategies.

### Critical Thinking Skills

Critical thinking is integrated fully into the curriculum. Higher order thinking skills, such as getting clarification and inferencing, are explicitly taught in the two grades.

### Study Skills

Study skills are a key feature of the curriculum to help students become more self-directed. Basic study skills such as dictionary skills, library and research skills, paraphrasing, referencing and accurate citation of sources are built into class materials. Students learn general planning and organisational skills and self-monitoring skills in addition to more specific organisational skills. For example, students are encouraged to plan, draft, check and re-draft pieces of writing until they are satisfied with a final draft.

## Culture

English is presented as an international language that provides a means of communicating with other users of English, both inside and outside Oman.

## International perspectives

The themes and topics of the curriculum provide an international outlook and cover a range of issues which have a global impact. Students are encouraged to reflect on these issues and relate the subject matter and its implications on their own, specifically Omani, experience.

## Vocational

Many of the themes used link either directly or indirectly to the various vocational fields that many of the students enter. Examples of these are the hospitality industry and the retail

industry. Many of the language functions that are reviewed or newly introduced are transferable across a variety of vocational fields.

### Cross-curricular

Many of the themes are linked to other subject areas of the school curriculum, such as Science and Technology and the Social Sciences. Language and concepts introduced in one subject are recycled, reviewed and extended in the other subject areas. For example, science concepts taught in Science classes are revisited in English, adding English terminology to the Arabic vocabulary already introduced.

### Self-Study

There is an optional two-page spread concluding each unit, which teachers can opt to assign as self-study or for early finishers.

The content of *Across Cultures* focuses on facts about other countries and aspects of peoples' lives that students might find both interesting and useful, particularly if they plan to visit or study abroad. Students are provided with guided activities to help them make cross-cultural comparisons.

*Reading for Pleasure*, found in each unit, introduces students to a range of text-types and genres, covering a wide-range of topics.

## **Linguistic and non-linguistic objectives**

### Linguistic objectives

#### Vocabulary

Building up vocabulary knowledge is a core requirement for communicative competence in a foreign language. Achievement levels in vocabulary learning using the previous curriculum, according to the Ministry of Education's findings, were insufficient to equip students with the vocabulary needed as a foundation for university studies and employment purposes.

The English Language Curriculum *English for Me* and *Engage with English* aim to expose students to a wider range of vocabulary and encourage utilizing them in a variety of contexts. The curriculum intends to develop students understanding of high frequency words used in different styles and genres. They also develop reasonable content words related to each topic presented. The content words are selected, presented and practised carefully to suit each level. In some cases, the content words have been recycled in similar topics in later grades, e.g., vocabulary associated with travel, tourism and media. Opportunities are created to help students make their receptive vocabulary productive through the process of spiralling and recycling.

Students are exposed to word-building and 'word-attack' activities which develop their skills to work out meaning of unknown vocabulary using clues such as context, cohesive devices and word endings.

## Grammar

Within applied linguistics and foreign/second language acquisition in the last 40 years, considerable discussion has taken place about the role of grammar in language learning.

This discussion has revolved around two main points; whether deductive (explicit teaching of rules to be applied to language) or inductive (discovery based inducement of rules from language) approaches to grammar teaching should be used, and what the appropriate form of a grammatical syllabus should be. The professional consensus is that grammar cannot be ignored, and ways must be sought to integrate grammar into the English Curriculum in ways which enhance its role in facilitating the development of second language proficiency, and which are compatible with a communicative orientation to language teaching.

The curriculum aims to give students a firm grounding in the core grammatical features of English, since grammar is an important component in the development of receptive and productive skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. Grammatical competence, however, should not become an end in itself. Existing resources for the development of a grammatical syllabus (e.g. Threshold Level) have been consulted, as well as successful international ESL/EFL courses, to develop appropriate grammatical items as a basis for a grammatical component of the curriculum at both Basic and Post-Basic Education levels. Care is taken not to overload the curriculum with terms of grammatical items, but to recycle grammatical items to ensure that they are re-introduced throughout the curriculum.

### The Skills of Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking

For Omani students to be competent users of English, the curriculum need to address the four main language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The curriculum identifies appropriate target levels for each skill and aims to help students gain functional abilities in each area. The emphasis throughout the curriculum is on purposeful and meaningful teaching and learning, leading to the acquisition of skills, which can be transferred and used by learners with different backgrounds and interests in a variety of

situations. Teachers and students are encouraged to see the goals of learning beyond the specific activities, texts and content they encounter in school. At the same time, it is realised that students can develop their language through activities that are enjoyable and pleasurable. In developing objectives for each skill area, an appropriate conceptual framework is employed to identify outcomes in terms of target performance. For example:

- Listening: Can follow an oral story and identify characters, situations and outcomes
- Speaking: Can describe an object referring to shape, size and colour
- Reading: Can read a paragraph and identify topic sentence.
- Writing: Can write a short summary of a text.

### *Non-linguistic objectives*

#### Culture

Part of the focus of the educational reform proposals is on education as a means of expanding students' understanding of the world. Cultural awareness is an important element of this process. Since languages are vehicles for the expression of culture, its values, the English Curriculum include a cultural dimension. It seeks to present English as a window to the outside world, while at the same time serving to reinforce the students' own cultural values and traditions. This includes developing awareness of some of the cultural patterns and differences between Omani culture and other cultures (e.g. differences in food, schooling, sports, domestic life, etc.), as well as differences in communication patterns across cultures (such as awareness of differences in conversational interaction, greetings, small talk, etc.). In developing a cultural strand to the curriculum, care is taken to ensure that an Omani/Arab perspective on cultural values is emphasised in the curriculum.

## Learning Strategies

In view of the philosophy of the educational reform, the curriculum aims not only to develop and promote students' linguistic knowledge and skills, but also to improve their capacity for effective and independent learning. Some emphasis is therefore placed on developing student strategies for classroom learning, as well as preparing them for the many opportunities available for learning English outside the classroom. To achieve these goals, a focus on strategies is included in the curriculum. Students need to be conscious of the nature of learning strategies, to be able to recognise effective as well as ineffective strategies, and to develop awareness of their own modes of learning and how these can be monitored and enhanced in a positive direction.

## Attitudes and Motivation

Affective factors play an important role in facilitating foreign/second language learning for students at all levels. The curriculum therefore addresses attitudinal factors related to teaching and learning. This is done in a number of ways, such as the lively and interesting design of materials, the inclusion of activities that provide fun and relaxation for students, such as songs and games, a focus on reading for pleasure, and the use of characters, which amuse and entertain students. It is also important to incorporate activities that draw on the students' own life experiences and interests. Pacing the entry of new items also plays an important role in determining the level of difficulty of materials: if materials are too difficult or challenging, students' motivation to learn is affected.

## **Methods & Approaches**



The English for Me methodology (Grades 1-10) is based on an integrated, multi-layered approach to language learning, with functional and grammatical aspects of language, skills, vocabulary, pronunciation and learning strategies developed through key topics.

The Engage of English curriculum (Grades 11 and 12) is based on a communicative and skills-based methodology which encourages active student participation and collaboration, rather than a teacher-fronted and dominated classroom methodology.

## **Textbooks & Materials**

### Textbooks

Government schools in Oman use only one English national course book , an in-house curriculum, called English for Me(EfM) for grades 1-10 and 'Engage with English' (EWE) for grades 11-12, which is based on the new reform project. Every school must use this book and is required to finish all of the lessons on time. Therefore the syllabus is seen as the main source of input.

The English Language Curriculum reflects students' conceptual development and maturational levels at each stage of learning. The curriculum for Grades 1 to 4 plays a crucial role in developing a linguistic and attitudinal foundation for learning in later grades. It develops positive attitudes towards the learning of English by using communicative and experiential approaches to language teaching and learning. It is essential that children understand from an early age that to be a successful language learner, they must see English as a tool for communication, rather than an academic exercise to be memorised. It is also important to build on children's natural instincts of learning by doing.

The English Curriculum for Grades 5 to 7 further consolidates the foundations established in the first four years of school. It also reinforces that English is a tool for communication

and functional use. This gives students the confidence and linguistic foundation in English, as well as the practical skills, to serve them beyond the Basic Education years. The curriculum for Grades 5 to 7 also provides a careful introduction to the elements of the English Language (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary) along with reflecting the fact that students can employ both experiential and analytical modes of learning.

At Grades 8 to 12, the curriculum has more advanced linguistic skills and a broader knowledge of the linguistic systems of English. At this stage, the approach of English as a tool for communication and functional use is balanced with a more analytical mode of learning.

### *Components of the English Language Curriculum*

#### Cycle 1 : Grades 1-4 (English for Me)

- Classbooks
- Skills Books
- Teacher's Books
- Big Books for Shared Reading
- Listening and Song CDs
- Resource Packs

#### Cycle 2: Grades 5-10 (English for Me)

- Classbooks
- Skills Books
- Teacher's Books

- Song CDs (Grades 5-8) Listening CDs
- Resource Packs

#### Post-Basic: Grades 11-12(Engage with English)

- Course Books
- Workbooks
- Teacher's Books
- Listening CDs
- Core Readers
- Book Boxes
- Elective Course

#### Classbooks/Course Books

The *English for Me* Classbook contains core stimulus materials for classroom activities. These include songs, rhymes, stories, games, craft activities and listening comprehension. It is also a learner-centred workbook of pen-and-paper activities only for grades 1-4, including tasks such as colouring and drawing, matching and categorising, games, writing, and peer interaction activities. From grade 5, students use the Classbook as a reference book only, with their writing exercises being transferred to their exercise book.

The *Engage with English* Course book shares the stimulus materials for the classroom with the Workbook. Students use exercise books for their writing activities, allowing more room on the pages of the Course Books for colourful pictures, illustrations, texts, activities and exercises to help them further their language comprehension in a more sophisticated and graduated way. Each unit also consists of a self-study section with lighter topics called

*Across Cultures* (designed to introduce students to places and cultures around the world) and *Reading for Pleasure* (written works in various genres including a number of topics), ultimately encouraging students to read more in English.

### Skills Books/Workbooks

The *English for Me Skills Book* is designed to introduce children to English in their early years. They are introduced to writing patterns, directionality, the English alphabet and English numbers, with the eventual outcome of writing in the English language using both printed and cursive script. However, the Skills Book also provides opportunities for children to explore other skills such as those in math, life and science, using their English knowledge. The Skills Book compliments the lessons of the Classbook and is a fundamental component of the *English for Me*, providing children with a well-rounded foundation in English language.

The *Engage with English Workbook* provides the students with pen-and-paper activities as well as longer exercises that they can complete in their exercise book. The exercises are directly linked to the lessons in the Course Book, providing a wide range of topics and language exposure. Two pages in each unit are also dedicated to accompany the *Across Cultures* and *Reading for Pleasure* section in the Class Book. The final page of each unit provides an opportunity for students to self-assess and review key items learned. The last section of the Workbook includes a reference section to help students further their knowledge in writing, grammar, listening and vocabulary.

### Teacher's Book

The Teacher's Book aims to provide full support for the teacher in planning their lessons for the semester. The curriculum introduction describes the aims of the curriculum and gives a rationale for the adopted approach to language teaching. The book also suggests ways of managing different types of activities and using the routines of classroom interaction as a context for language learning.

The Teacher's Book provides step-by-step lesson notes for each unit, which help teachers create suitable environments for effective and enjoyable language learning.

CDs:

The *English for Me* Listening CDs and the Songs and Rhymes CDs feature both child and adult speakers, and provide a wide variety of natural listening materials including songs, rhymes, stories and specific listening tasks.

The *Engage with English* Listening CDs feature mainly adult speakers with a variety of accents, both native and non-native English speakers. The listening selections include dialogues (conversations and interviews) and monologues (lectures and storytelling).

Resource Packs

There are two types of resource packs used in the *English for Me: The Class Resource Pack* (CRP) and the *Teacher's Resource Pack* (TRP). These are distributed to schools at the beginning of the academic year. Included in the packs are posters, flashcards, word cards and activity cards.

**Resources**

## Online Resources

Searching:

<http://www.google.com>

<http://www.ask.com>

Internet Guides and resources:

<http://www.eslcafe.com/search>

<http://towerofenglish.com>

[http://www.cal.org/caela/esl\\_resources](http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources)

<http://sitesforteachers.com/index.html>

<http://www.eduplace.com/activity/>

[www.manythings.org](http://www.manythings.org)

[www.go4english.com](http://www.go4english.com)

<http://esl.about.com/library/lessons/blphontranscript.htm>

<http://www.learninga-z.com/?ct=lpbtm>

<http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/index.html>

<http://atozteacherstuff.com/Themes>

[http://www.csun.edu/~hcedu013/eslplans.html \(links page\)](http://www.csun.edu/~hcedu013/eslplans.html)

Crossword Puzzle Maker:

<http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com> (type words or phrases on to the screen and get word-searches, crosswords and other word puzzles)

Poetry:

<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~leslieob/pizzaz.html> (poetry, story-telling, creative writing)

<http://www.gigglepoetry.com>

<http://www.poetry4kids.com>

<http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/poetry>

<http://www.todayinliterature.com>

#### Journals:

<http://iteslj.org>: (TESOL's online journal)

<http://iteslj.org/links/TESL/Articles>: (links to hundreds of other journals and articles)

<http://eltj.oupjournals.org/archive/index.dtl>

#### Reference:

<http://towerofenglish.com/encyclopedia.html>

<http://towerofenglish.com/yourdictionary.html>

<http://towerofenglish.com/rhymezone.html>: (type in a word and get a list of rhyming words)

<http://en.wikipedia.org> an online encyclopaedia

#### Story Telling:

<http://www.storyarts.org/lessonplans/index.html>

<http://storybookcastle.com>

#### Publishers:

<http://www.onestopenenglish.com>(Macmillan)

<http://www.longman.com>(Longman, includes links to Penguin material)

<http://www.oup.com/elt/?cc=ua>(Oxford University Press)

#### Pronunciation:

<http://www.langsci.ucl.ac.uk/ipa/>: (the official site for IPA [the International Phonetic Alphabet] -including free IPA computer fonts)

<http://www.spokenenglish.org>: (activities for practicing pronunciation)

#### Writing:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/index.html>(for teachers and students)

<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~leslieob/pizzaz.html>: (creative writing ideas)

<http://eslbee.com/>(free online writing course for high-intermediate level)

#### Teacher Training:

<http://www.developingteachers.com>

#### Organisations:

[www.moe.gov.om](http://www.moe.gov.om)

<http://www.omanet.om/english/home.asp>

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

[www.britishcouncil.org/me-oman](http://www.britishcouncil.org/me-oman)

#### **Instruction Time**



Grades	No. of English periods
Grade 1-3	6 periods per week
Grade 4	7 periods per week
Grades 5-10	5 periods per week
Grades 11&12	7 periods per week

### Assessment

#### The weighting for each element

##### Grades 1-4

Elements	Grade One	Grade Two	Grades Three & Four		
			Continuous Assessment	Class Test	Total
Listening	30%	25%	15%	10%	25%
Speaking	30%	25%	25%	-	25%
Reading	20%	25%	15%	10%	25%
Writing	20%	25%	15%	10%	25%
TOTAL	100%	100%	70%	30%	100%

##### Grades 5-10

Elements	Grades 5 to 9				Grade 10		
	Continuous Assessment	Class Test	End of Semester Test	Total	Continuous Assessment	End of Semester Test	Total
Listening	-	5%	10%	15%	-	15%	15%
Speaking	15%	-	-	15%	20%	-	20%
Reading	10%	5%	10%	25%	5%	20%	25%
Writing	10%	5%	10%	25%	10%	15%	25%
Grammar/ Vocabulary	5%	5%	10%	20%	5%	10%	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Grades 11&12

Elements	GRADE 11			GRADE 12		
	Continuous Assessment	Semester Test	TOTAL	Continuous Assessment	Semester Test	TOTAL
LST	-	15%	15%	-	15%	15%
SPK	20%	-	20%	15%	-	15%
RDG	5%	20%	25%	5%	25%	30%
WRT	10%	15%	25%	10%	20%	30%

GRM/VCB	5%	10%	15%	-	10%	10%
<i>Total</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>100%</i>

## 1.2. Marks grades and remarks

Mark Range	Letter-Grade	Remark
90% – 100%	A	Excellent
80% – 89%	B	Very good
65% – 79%	C	Good
50% – 64%	D	Satisfactory
49% or less	E	Needs further support

## Teacher Training

There are three in-service training courses, one for each level: Cycle 1, Cycle 2 and Post-Basic Education. They aim to develop the ability of teachers of English to teach in different levels effectively. Participants develop their understanding and techniques of teaching English.

These courses aim to develop participants' understanding of the theoretical principles, the approaches, and the language skills utilized in the new English Basic and Post-Basic Education curriculum. This is done through various methods including seminars, group tasks, workshops, presentations, guided observation in appropriate schools followed by reflection and discussion and also by individual self-directed study in the training room.

Apart of these main courses, the training department also established some orientation courses whenever needed. They focus on the changes in the curriculum every year by

highlighting these changes to teachers, senior English teachers, and English supervisors responsible for the target level of schools. In the academic year, 2011/2012, there are three orientation courses focusing on the changes in Grade 5 and Grade 3 course books and also the use of shared reading in grade 2.

## **Management & Evaluation**

### *Curriculum Evaluation*

There are different definitions of Curriculum Evaluation found in the literature about the topic. It can be defined as a systematic process of collecting and analyzing all relevant information for the purpose of judging and assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum to promote improvement (Nichols, et al. 2006; Marsh, 2004: 106 and Brown, 1989: 223 in Brown, 1995: 218). The definition consists of key words such as *systematic, process, collect and analyse, relevant information, curriculum effectiveness' assessment, and to improve.*

Curriculum Evaluation can be either a small-scale task involving a very limited number of participants if it is classroom based, or a massive large-scale task involving a number of schools, teachers, parents, officers and some community members. An action research conducted by a teacher in his/her class with learners can also be part of Curriculum Evaluation. On the other hand, an internal or external evaluator evaluating a whole curriculum covering several schools, a large number of teachers and learners and which may cover the schools surroundings is also seen as Curriculum Evaluation.

There are some common characteristics of different types of Curriculum Evaluation. It starts with needs analysis which is on-going as it never finishes (Brown, 1995). This shows

that there is a need for Curriculum Evaluation within any curriculum system and within any teaching and learning process. It cannot be only one short task although that can be part but not all of it. Generally Curriculum Evaluation helps to connect all other elements of curriculum and also to highlight positive and negative issues related to these elements such as the aims, goals and purpose of different subjects, guidelines for course design, teaching and learning principles and others. Brown (1995: 217) says that the absence of Curriculum Evaluation will result in the other elements lacking cohesion.

### *The purpose of curriculum evaluation*

As there are different types of evaluation, the purpose of each type will differ in needs, and stages. Cunningsworth (1995) states that the purpose of an evaluation can be to achieve one of these things: adopt a new course book , or to identify good and bad things about an existing course book . However, it can also be to compare different course books utilized in a particular curriculum or programme.

There is a need for a preparatory stage for any evaluation as in any other task (Nation and Macalister, 2010; Nichols, et al. 2006). This includes whether the whole evaluation is worth doing, is necessary or whether it is even possible to be conducted at this particular time. In the preparatory stage, the planner needs to get answers as to how long it would take, and how much it might cost. The willingness of the evaluator and the participants such as teachers to be part of it and also what kind of evidence the evaluation will aim to gather (Nation and Macalister, 2010) and some other questions also needs to be taken into account.

### Who should be involved?

There are two types of participants, insiders and outsiders (Richards, 2001 p.296). Insiders are those who are involved directly in developing and implementing the course. These can be teachers, learners, and the curriculum officers. The insider participants or evaluators can work better with the formative type of evaluation, which will be discussed later. Outsiders are others who are not involved directly in developing or implementing the course. They can be consultants or administrators who help to identify the insiders' perceptions of the course and how it is working inside the classroom.

There is a need to involve both insiders and outsiders in the evaluation depending on its purpose. However, in order to identify whether it is necessary to involve anyone in a Curriculum Evaluation, there is a need to answer these four questions for each of the participants:

- What kind of information the teacher/learner/parent/officer/others might supply?
- How useful is this information?
- How could this information be elicited/gathered?
- How can this information be organised and recalled?

Course evaluation looks at both strengths and weaknesses, but it is naturally the weaknesses that cause concern. This stresses that people involved in it need to be involved in the process, in the planning stage and carrying out the evaluation (Nation and Macalister, 2010: 128). For this reason, some organisations do consider trying to involve an outside evaluator who develops an easier interaction and agreement on how to do the evaluation. If the evaluator fails to gain the co-operation and interest of the staff by meeting them and showing the need and the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluation cannot be successful.

This can involve learners, teachers, senior teachers, the school principal, the school supervisor, Ministry officers, parents, consultants and others. Some of these can be part of evaluation but this will depend on the focus and the purpose of the evaluation.

### *Gathering the information*

There are different methods of gathering the information for the purposes of evaluation. Some of these are more related to some of the evaluation dimensions, and other methods are also more related to other dimensions. These methods include use of materials, interviews, questionnaires/self-report scales, observation and checklists, tests, diaries and journals, teachers' records, learners' feedback, case studies, audio-video recording and action research. All of these methods are commonly used. I will highlight in depth only action research as one of the methods of gathering data about Curriculum Evaluation.

#### Action research as a tool for Curriculum Evaluation:

Action research conducted by a teacher in his/her class with learners can also be a tool for Curriculum Evaluation. Action research is defined as a way to explore a problem with the aim of finding a solution to the problem (Creswell, 2008). Tomlinson (2001) states that the idea of encouraging teachers to do action research about materials (Edge and Richards 1993; Jolly and Bolitho 1998) helps to develop some instruments to be used in pre-use, in-use and post-use evaluation. This can be useful for the teacher and the data collection stage.

### *The result of evaluation*

The evaluation starts with the preparatory stage and needs analysis then specifies the purpose of it and involves the right evaluators and participants for it. This is followed by specifying the right dimension or a number of dimensions and choosing the appropriate methods of data collection and analyzing it. These results need to be presented. Some of these results need to be treated confidentially especially the names of the participants. These ethical issues need to be considered and treated positively. There is no harm in saying for example that specific teachers commented on the curriculum design without specifying the names of these teachers as it will not add anything to the results.

The results of evaluation might affect the curriculum, the teaching environment and may help with the professional development of teachers (Nation and Macalister, 2010). It might also help teachers to develop a sense of the ownership.

Curriculum Evaluation results need to be publicized. Some of these evaluations end up as written reports. In some cases there would be a number of reports which target different audiences. Usually they would be a report for the public which shows the general issues of the evaluation. Nation and Macalister, 2010 add that an oral report should be made along with a written one. This is to make sure that the written report is explained and to highlight some issues which cannot be covered in the written report.

There is a need for these reports to sum up the main issues and show implications and ways to improve things. However, there is also a need for a follow-up stage to evaluate the evaluation and to follow-up the possibility for these evaluation recommendations. Moreover, these evaluations and data collected need to be stored in a systematic way by developing a good system of record keeping of data and also of the different types of evaluation conducted.



### Record keeping

The need to establish a record-keeping system is vital. In most organizations and at different stages of evaluation it seems that the information collected is not organised. The information tends to be subjective, random and unfocused, is mainly as a result of unplanned data collection and not having a clear system of who, when and how to collect the information.

The more documents available, the easier to reach a decision about the curriculum (Richards, 2001). The documents might include course statistics such as how many learners have joined this course if it is an elective course, the course book, the course work such as tests, and samples of learners' work. Other documents could be written comments about the course, and also course reviews about the course by teachers who taught the course. Other documents can be students' self-assessment tasks.

Some of the data collected by teachers in a school for example is usually followed by a meeting with other teachers or with a coordinator to combine the information and form a complete set of evaluation information. The observations and the sheets used also need to be planned too. In general, all data collected within the evaluation process or even in regular teaching needs to be recorded and saved for any evaluation.

Traditionally evaluation takes place through the use of checklists or questionnaires to determine the materials' suitability for use in a particular teaching context (Ellis, 1997). This is what happens in many places such as Oman. Tomlinson (2001) adds that the second move was made by setting certain objectives by which evaluators evaluate in order to provide more reliable information about each curriculum. Later on some attention was given to principles and procedures for developing criteria for specific situations in which

the framework used must be determined by the reasons, objectives and circumstances of the evaluation (Tomlinson 1999 & Tomlinson (2001).

Every year, the curriculum section of each subject suggests the grade which they expect the Department of Curriculum Evaluation to work on. The department uses different curriculum officers including all subjects. They also use the supervision departments and teachers in schools to evaluate the books.

The department use mainly document analysis sheets for educational researchers within the Department of Curriculum Evaluation, Curriculum Officers, supervisors and teachers of the same subject. This ends up with a final analysis report of that subject.

#### **The framework's references:**

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