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THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

TaLiC

Teaching and Learning Innovation Centre

教與學創新中心

Enhancing Learning Through Curriculum Design

24th June 2025

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Today's session will:

1. Explore what is meant by 'curriculum' in higher education
2. Consider key features for effective curriculum design and development
3. Present different curriculum models
4. Show how to achieve constructive alignment in your curriculum



By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Define curriculum and curriculum development
2. Design a curriculum with constructive alignment



In your groups – **without electronic devices:**

List the factors we need to consider
when developing a curriculum in
Higher Education



The concept of 'curriculum' in Higher Education

There is no single definition of 'curriculum' in higher education.

Possibly guidance:

- Content
- Experience
- Cultural reproduction
- Professional body requirements

The Discipline:
What conception(s) of our discipline should we teach?

Research Interests:
What are our research interests and strengths?

Costs and Resources:
What does the curriculum cost to deliver?

Student Time:
Supporting student learning *in and out* of class

Learning Methods and technologies? *How* can students best be taught here?

External Quality Requirements:
What do external (or internal) quality arrangements require?

Classroom Research?
What does evaluation say about (redesigning) the curriculum?

Educational Theories:
What does educational research recommend?

Modularity, degree and credit structures

Student Needs:
What do students need?

Aims and Objectives:
What do we want students to be able to know and do?

Assessment as Learning:
How we design the assessment shapes the curriculum

The Curriculum

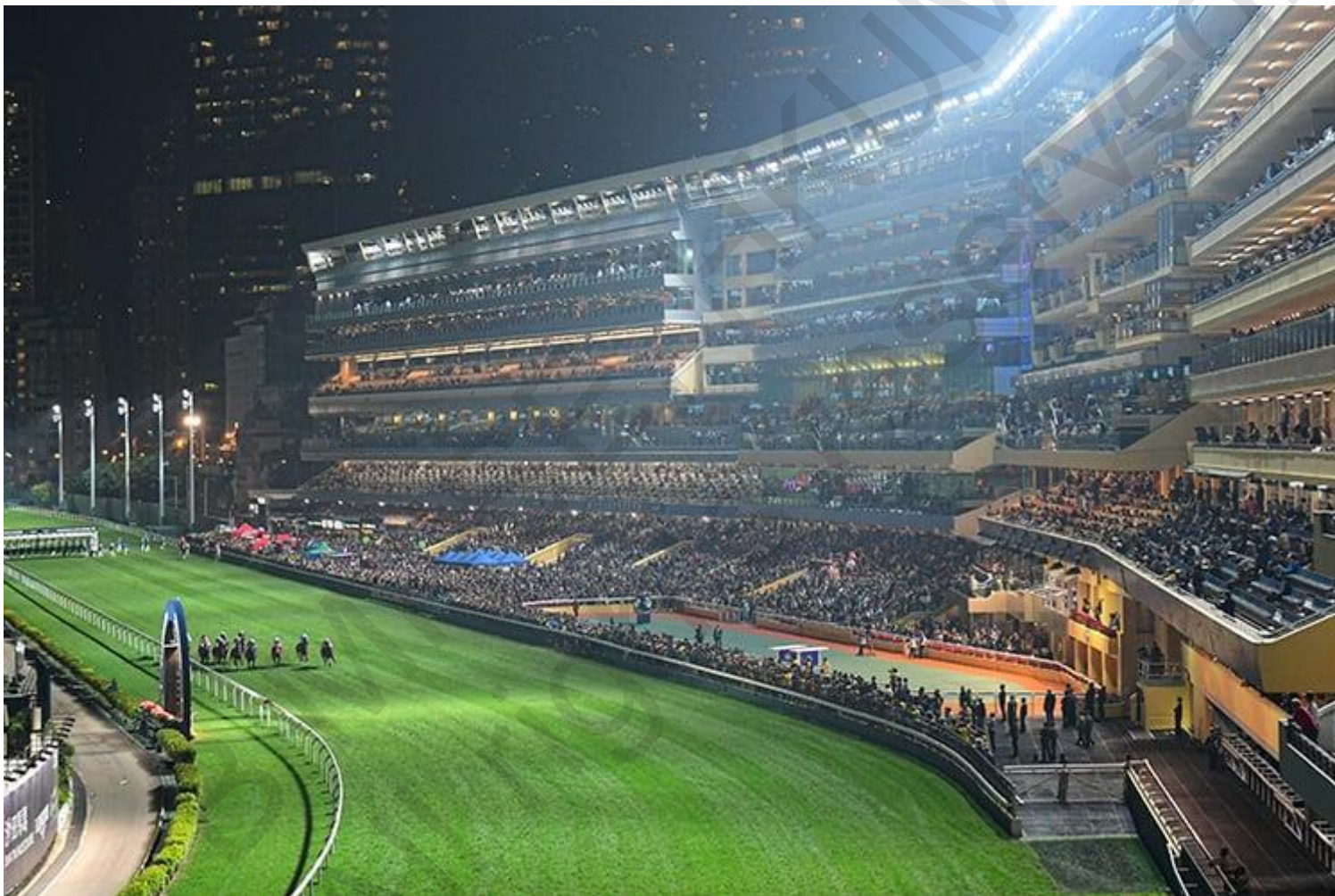
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graph TD; Discipline[The Discipline] --> Curriculum[The Curriculum]; Research[Research Interests] --> Curriculum; Costs[Costs and Resources] --> Curriculum; Time[Student Time] --> Curriculum; Methods[Learning Methods] --> Curriculum; External[External Quality Requirements] --> Curriculum; Classroom[Classroom Research] --> Curriculum; Theories[Educational Theories] --> Curriculum; Modularity[Modularity] --> Curriculum; Needs[Student Needs] --> Curriculum; Aims[Aims and Objectives] --> Curriculum; Assessment[Assessment as Learning] --> Curriculum;
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Currere (Latin)





Designing a curriculum is

To design social infrastructures that foster learning (Wenger 1998:225)



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Vertical curriculum (Lego model)

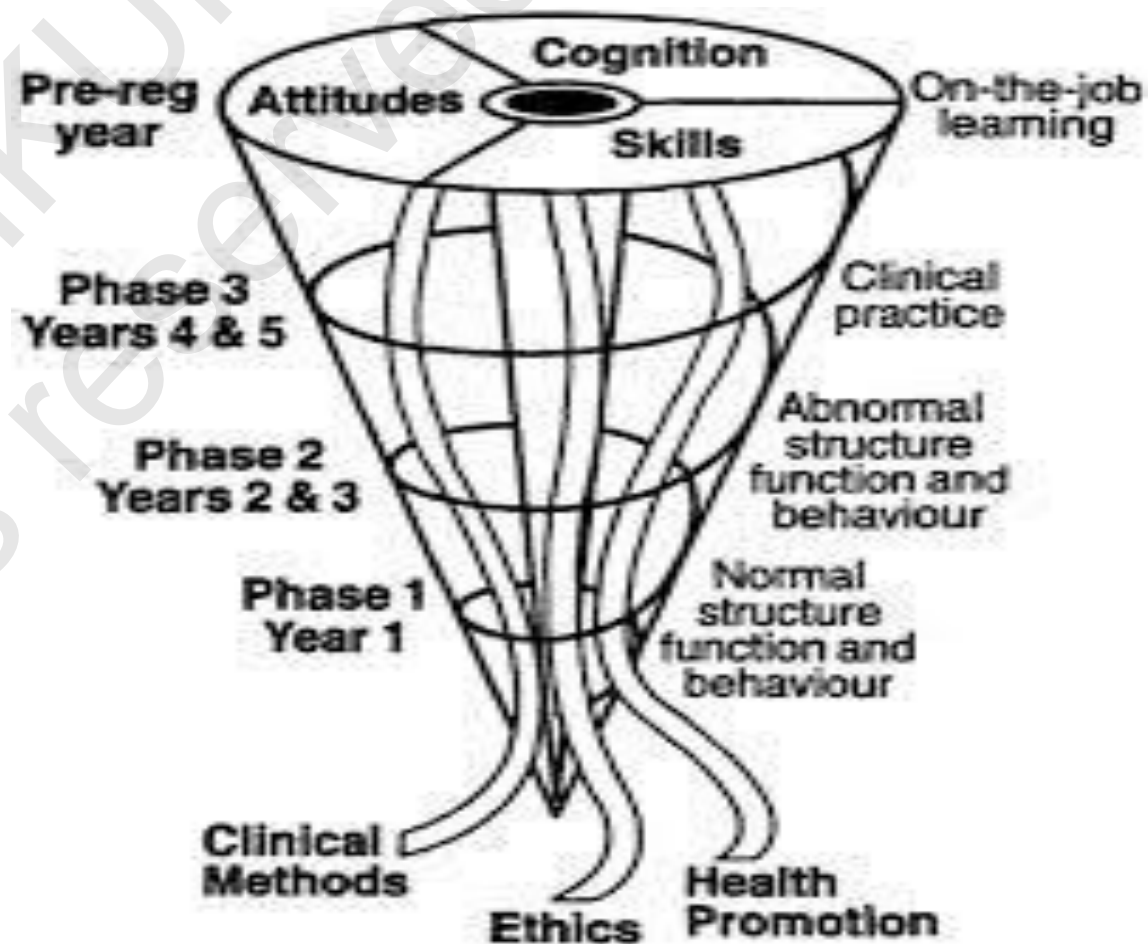
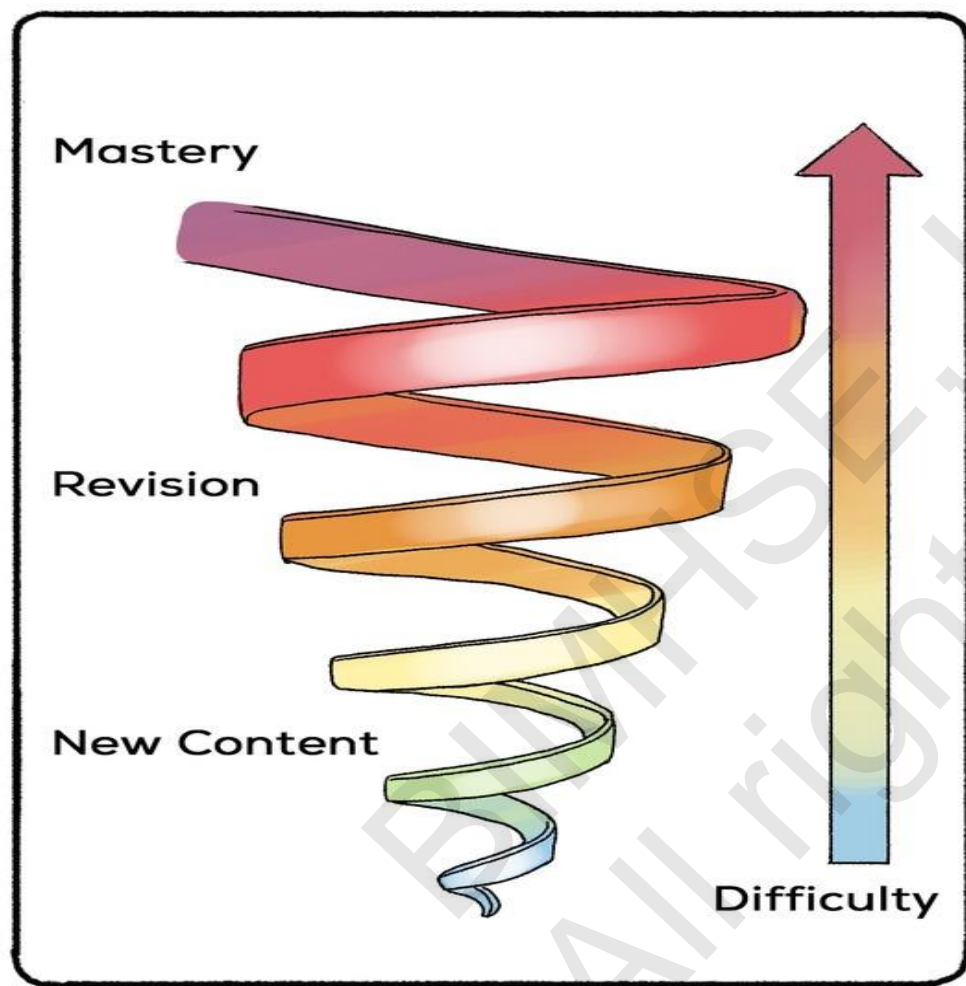




Jigsaw curriculum



Spiral curriculum





Spiral curriculum

Traditional focus

Content

Delivery of content

New focus

Organization of content

Iterative approach to delivery

- Topics are revisited
- The level of difficulty is increasing
- New learning is linked to previous learning
- The students' competency increases (mastery)



Effective curriculum development

Traditional curriculum

Teacher centred

Information gathering

Discipline-based

Hospital-based

Standard programme

Apprenticeship-based/opportunistic

Reformed curriculum

Student centred

Problem-based

Integrated

Community-based

Electives

Systematic

Dent (2023)

SPICES Model (Dent 2023)

Student-centred

Problem-based

Integrated

Community-based

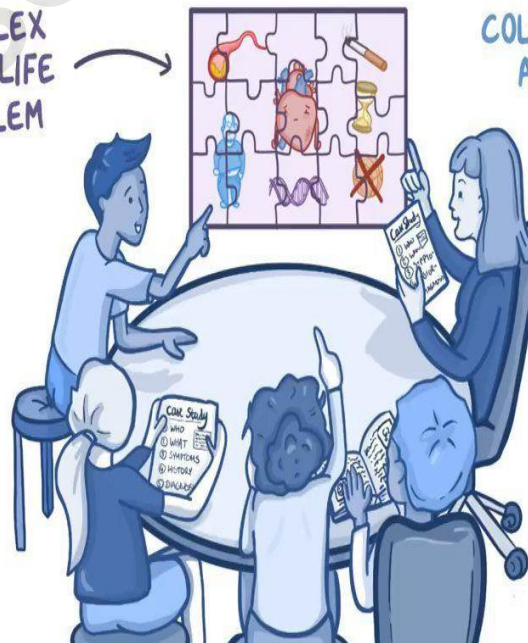
Electives

Systematic

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING (PBL)

COMPLEX
REAL-LIFE
PROBLEM

COLLABORATIVE
APPROACH





In your groups – **without electronic devices:**

List the
characteristics
of a learning
outcome





Learning outcomes

- A statement that **predicts** what learners will have gained as a result of a learning process
- A statement that specifies the **minimum achievement** required at the point of assessment in order for a student to pass
- A statement that is **measurable**
- A statement that may apply to **a single session, a course** or **a whole programme**

What follow from these basic principles is:



Learning outcomes are **threshold** statements

1. Learning outcomes are statements of **essential learning**
2. Learning described in the learning outcomes is what must be **attained** and **demonstrated**
3. Learning outcomes **must be passed**



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Have a look at your own learning outcomes



**Learning
Outcomes**

The text 'Learning Outcomes' is written in a large, bold, black font with a yellow outline. To the left of the word 'Learning' is a blue graduation cap icon. Above the word 'Outcomes' is a red apple icon.



Backward Design

What must the students learn?

Intended Learning Outcomes [ILOs]

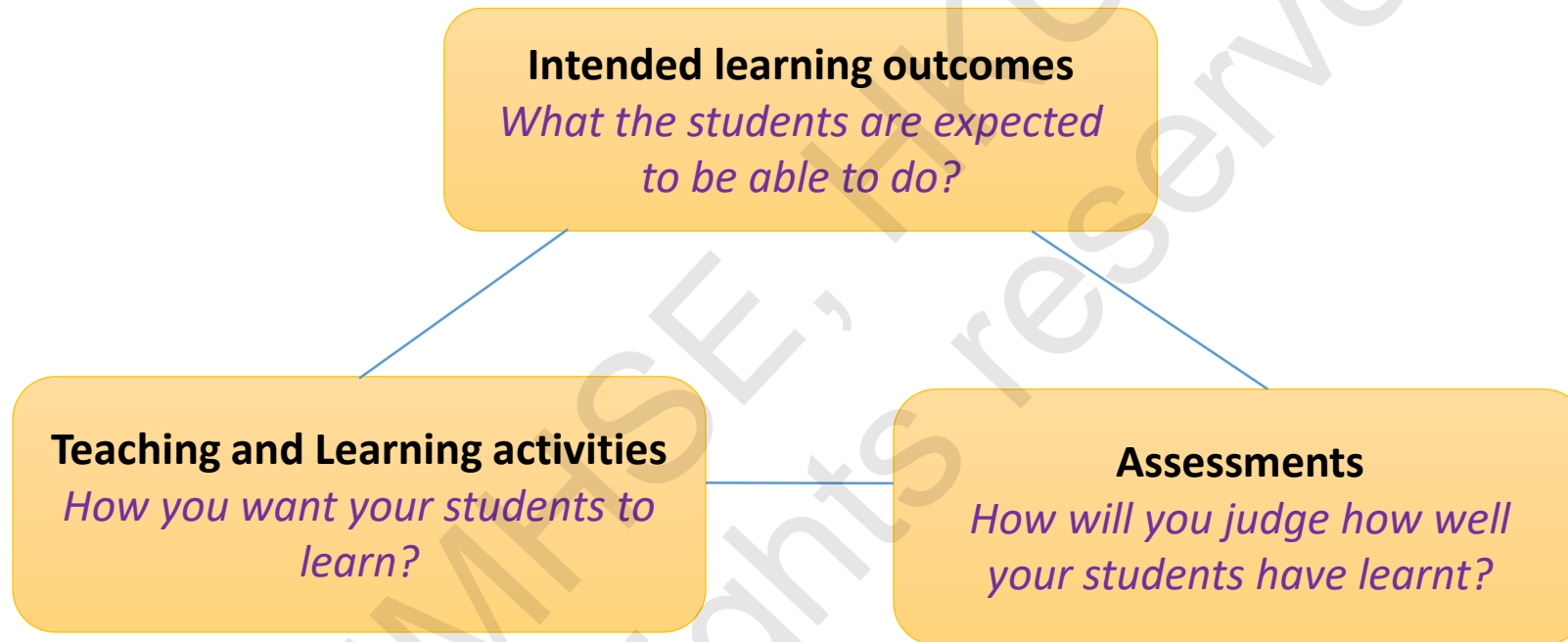
How will I measure their learning?

Assessment

How can I help students meet the ILOs?

Instruction and Activities

Constructive Alignment [OBASL]



Outcome Based Approach to Student Learning



Challenges in Curriculum Design



- Too many assessments
- Little variety in assessment

Could we consider synoptic assessment?



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