# Designing Curriculum
## Steve Alley

### Definition

**cur·ric·u·lum** \kəˈrikyələm/ (noun): The means and materials with which students will interact for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes (education.com).

The term "curriculum" refers to everything that is used to teach students a specific lesson. In this broad definition, it includes spoken words, printed material, object lessons, visuals, guests, field trips, etc.
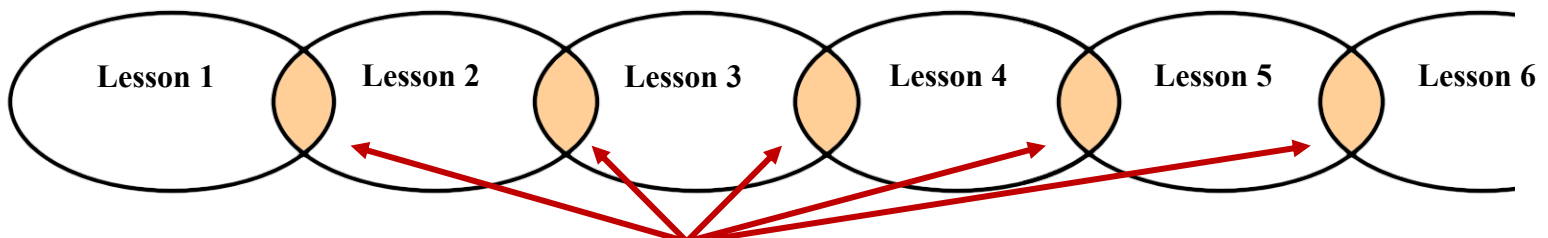
### The Curriculum "Chain"

A "curriculum" is simply a group of lessons with a similar focus "chained" together. A "curriculum" could include just a group of lessons, or a series of "units" of study. A "unit" of study is a group of lessons that deal with a specific topic or concept. In a curriculum that includes units of study, the units combine to make the total curriculum. An example of a curriculum that includes units of study would be:

**Curriculum Title:** *"The Animals of The World"*

| **Unit 1** | **Unit 2** | **Unit 3** | **Unit 4** | **Unit 5** |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| *The Animals of North America* | *The Animals of South America* | *The Animals of Africa* | *The Animals of Asia* | *The Animals of Europe* |
| (8 Lessons) | (8 Lessons) | (8 Lessons) | (8 Lessons) | (8 Lessons) |

Effective curriculum includes lessons that are "chained" together. This "chaining" is simply a connection between the lessons. Each lesson connects to the previous lesson, and prepares the learners for the following lesson. Here is an illustration of the "chaining" concept:



**Overlap Areas** (orange):
Lesson connections to previous lesson
and preparation for future lesson.

### "Scope And Sequence"

When curriculum writers talk about the "scope and sequence" of a curriculum, they are referring to two aspects of the curriculum:

**The "Scope"** = What is taught, or covered, in the entire curriculum.
**The "Sequence"** = In what order are the concepts covered taught?

The scope and sequence is usually displayed in a chart that reveals all of the lessons in the curriculum, and the order they are presented. A fourth-grade scope and sequence for California history would state the "scope" of years for the lessons (1850 – present); and in what order the topics are taught, the "sequence."

## Adding Ideas To Enhance The Curriculum

Just connecting a few lessons together doesn't create a life-changing curriculum. Once the "Scope and Sequence" is created, it is important to begin building the components that make a curriculum memorable and effective. Those components need to be age-appropriate for the various ages or grades of the children who will experience the curriculum. The components need to employ the 4 "modes" of learning: **Audio Mode** (using the ears in the lesson), **Visual Mode** (using the eyes in the lesson), **Tactile Mode** (using the hands in the lesson), and **Experiential Mode** (using physical activity in the lesson). Here is a list of possible components, for each "mode," that a curriculum can utilize. These components may be repeated various times throughout the scope and sequence of the lessons.

### Audio Mode Components
1. **Stories** – Lesson-related stories told by the teacher, a child, a parent, or a guest.
2. **Songs** – Songs that illustrate, introduce, or apply the lesson content.
3. **News Stories** – News stories (online, printed, or recorded) that illustrate the lesson content.
4. **Testimonies** – Personal stories of success, failure, or encounters that illustrate the lesson content.

### Visual Mode Components
1. **Pictures** – Lesson-related images that stir or challenge the imagination or depict the lesson content.
2. **Maps** – Maps that show the geographic area in which the story or lesson took place.
3. **Object Lessons** – Science experiments or physical demonstrations that illustrate the lesson content.
5. **Zoom Visits** – Visits to lesson-related locations or guests via video conferencing platforms.
6. **Guests** – Lesson-related visits from guests with a talent, story, possession, or accomplishment.
7. **Videos** – Video clips that illustrate, introduce, or apply the lesson content.
8. **Role Plays / Drama** – Staged reenactments or performances that illustrate the lesson content.
9. **Art** – Displayed pieces of art that draw the children into the lesson content.

### Tactile Mode Components
1. **Arts / Crafts** – Any lesson-related art activity that gets the children's hands involved in the lesson.
2. **Coloring Pages** – Coloring pages that illustrate the lesson content or Bible story.
3. **Collages** – Children create collages from pictures or items that reflect the lesson.
4. **Writing** – Children write about the lesson (blogs, letters, stories, etc.)
5. **Building Dioramas** – Children build miniature models of the lesson or story.

### Experiential Mode Components
1. **Service Projects** – Involving the children (and parents?) in lesson-related service activities.
2. **Role Plays** – Let the children create and perform in lesson-related role plays.
3. **Interactive Guests** – Invite guests whose talent, accomplishments, or possessions reflect the lesson.
4. **Field Trips** – Organize trips to on-campus or off-campus locations that reflect the lesson.
5. **Interviews** – Challenge the children to interview other people about lesson-related subjects.
6. **Conducting Surveys** – Challenge the children to conduct lesson-related surveys at school.
7. **Witnessing** – Empower the children to talk to their friends at school about lesson-related topics.
8. **Fasting** – Challenge the children to fast from something related to the lesson content.