

Preliminary Curriculum Considerations

Audio Descriptive Text

Title: Chapter 3. Using the HECAT; Preliminary Curriculum. Images from HECAT document showing forms and text coming from Chapter 4, including an Acceptability Analysis form, Feasibility Analysis form, and Affordability Analysis form. Active Child icon related to guiding questions.

Video Summary

- Before investing extensive time in reviewing the suitability of curriculum content, first consider some important general characteristics. This may eliminate many curricula early in the review process and save time.
 - The **Accuracy Analysis** helps rate the accuracy of the health, medical, and scientific information in the curriculum.
 - The **Acceptability Analysis** helps rate the appropriateness of the curriculum as it relates to the norms of the community, state and local policies, avoidance of bias and stereotypes, and the health education needs of the students.
 - The **Feasibility Analysis** helps determine if the curriculum is feasible to implement in the classroom.
 - The **Affordability Analysis** helps determine whether a school district can afford the curriculum.

Audio Script

Let's look at some of these chapters and modules a bit closer, starting with Chapter 4, Preliminary Considerations.

Before investing extensive time in reviewing the suitability of curriculum content, first consider some important general characteristics of the curriculum, such as its accuracy, acceptability, feasibility, and affordability. You might eliminate many curricula early in the review process if they don't meet one or more of these considerations, saving time that is often wasted reviewing materials that don't meet your needs.

This chapter contains the tools needed to help you analyze and score these preliminary considerations.

To assess each category, guiding questions are provided in the HECAT. There is also a chart for organizing comments and a score sheet for rating the curriculum content. You can use these forms to record results of your curriculum analysis. The forms also serve as a quick reference of your curriculum's strengths and weaknesses.

The **Accuracy Analysis** helps you rate the accuracy of the health, medical, and scientific information in the curriculum.

Example questions to consider when analyzing accuracy include:

- Does the curriculum use accurate and appropriate terminology?
- Are data, information, and sources of information current?
- Are statements of fact based on data and sound science rather than anecdotal information or subjective opinion?

- Are sources of data clear and credible? Are they from a reputable public health or professional source?

If information is medically inaccurate, subjective, outdated, or not sound, use the Accuracy Analysis Chart to describe the errors, what needs to be done to correct the errors, and the degree of difficulty and cost to do so.

For example, our review team found an outdated statistic on page 13 of the curriculum that was more than 15 years old. It should be easy to find a more current statistic. It may take time to research, but this should be a relatively low-cost fix.

After the accuracy review is complete, score the curriculum based on its accuracy and the degree to which the correction of any errors can be reasonably completed. In our example, the curriculum scores a “3” because of some minor problems that should be easy to correct.

A review of a different curriculum might find that many statistics or statements of fact could not be verified. Therefore, the curriculum would score lower and be eliminated because of its high probability for being biased or inaccurate. The accuracy analysis score will be transferred to the Overall Summary Forms, which will be explained later in this training.

Next, the **Acceptability Analysis** helps you rate the appropriateness of the curriculum as it relates to the norms of the community, state and local policies, avoidance of bias and stereotypes, and the health education needs of the students.

Some example questions to consider when analyzing acceptability include:

- Do pictures and graphics avoid promoting biased or stereotypical perceptions of individuals or groups on the basis of personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, culture, age, or sexual orientation?
- Does the curriculum address the health problems that affect youth, families, and the community?
- Does the curriculum reflect cultural perspectives and beliefs found in families, the school, or the community?

The Acceptability Analysis Chart is completed in a similar way as the Accuracy Analysis Chart. If text, pictures, graphics, or other materials are unacceptable, describe them and what needs to be done to correct the problems. Determine the Acceptability Analysis Score based on the overall acceptability of the curriculum. This score is also transferred to the Overall Summary Forms.

The **Feasibility Analysis** helps you determine if the curriculum is feasible to implement in the classroom. It is based on the amount of instructional time available in the school day and throughout the year, and also the ease of implementation by most health education teachers.

Unlike the previous categories, only two questions need to be considered during the Feasibility Analysis.

- Can the curriculum be reasonably implemented by most health education teachers and others who might use this curriculum?
- Can the curriculum be implemented within the available classroom or instructional time?

Once these questions are addressed, along with any notes to justify the responses, determine the Feasibility Analysis Score and transfer the score to the Overall Summary Forms.

Last is the **Affordability Analysis**. This assessment allows you to determine if your school district can afford the curriculum in terms of:

- Initial materials costs,
- Implementation costs, and
- Sustainability costs.

Questions to be answered during the Affordability Analysis include:

- What are the additional financial costs related to implementing the curriculum?
- What funds are available for purchasing and implementing the curriculum?
- What changes are needed in staffing, facilities, or schedules to ensure lessons can be implemented as written?

Based on these factors, determine an Affordability Analysis Score. As with the previous analyses, this score is then transferred to the Overall Summary Forms that will be discussed later in this training. However, common sense dictates that if a curriculum is costly, it might not be considered or scored further.

This important review of preliminary curriculum considerations is encouraged to make sure the curricula meet local community needs and requirements of your state or school district.

Remember, completing these preliminary analyses help eliminate incomplete, inappropriate, and inadequate curricula from your list. Completing this review will speed up the overall curriculum selection process by focusing initial analysis on issues that typically get mixed in with a content review. Looking at these issues separately and using them to narrow curriculum choices will save everyone time in the end.