

# OECS Academic Recovery Programme Report 3

## An OECS Academic Recovery Programme for the OECS Member States

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

AFL	Assessment for Learning
ARP	Academic Recovery Programme
COVID-19	Novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2
EdTech	Educational technology
EDMU	OECS Education Development Management Unit
ELP	Early Learners Programme
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
MoE	Ministry of Education
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OER	Open educational resources
PD	Professional Development
SPED	Special education and disability
TPD	Teacher professional development

## Definitions

**Assessment for Learning** is how teachers seek and collect data and evidence of their students' learning to guide their decisions about their progress, what they need to achieve, and the steps they need to take to get there. An example suited to both online and face-to-face learning is the 'traffic light' assessment system.

**Community engagement** involves garnering the organised support of vetted professionals and other organisations working within the community, such as Hands Across the Seas, sports clubs, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, youth groups, faith-based organisations etc.

**Literacy** is the process through which an individual learns to read and write within a social context. It involves meaning-making from various modes of literacy, such as sound, visual, print, and so on.

**Numeracy** is the ability to understand — and reason using — basic numerical concepts. It involves comprehending and applying mathematical concepts in real-world situations to solve problems.

**Monitoring** involves systematically checking students' learning using a range of criteria and collecting this data for decision making. This occurs at multiple levels — in the classroom, at a school level, and at a national level — and occurs before, during, and after instruction, through a range of methods including diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments.

**Parental supervision** involves parents ensuring that their child completes assigned tasks on time. It entails seeking assistance from designated instructors and, in some cases, assisting their child by scaffolding and modelling concepts to aid their understanding. It should *not* be misconstrued as doing the child's work for them.

# 1. Introduction

After more than a year since the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, it is undeniable that the spread of the disease has had an unprecedented negative impact on education and children's learning progress worldwide. Globally, this loss of learning has not only been significant, but it has also been unequal: the disparity in achievement between students has widened, and students' learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS) varies even more than before the pandemic ([Angrist et al., 2020](#)). Across the world, governments, schools, and families have been faced with the challenge of helping students recover from learning loss caused by their time spent out of school and helping them address issues of inequality in that recovery.

Several authors have proposed actions to mitigate the loss of learning. For example, [McAleavy et al. \(2020\)](#) propose the following country-level responses member states and ministries of education can make to remedy the situation:

- Member states should begin by **systematically auditing the digital divide** and **design a distance learning regime** that is fit for the context of COVID-19.
- During the design and implementation of the distance learning regime, member states should **prioritise the needs of highly vulnerable, disadvantaged students, such as children with disabilities**.
- **Ensure that the distance learning of disadvantaged students is adequately monitored** and that quality assurance mechanisms give a voice to disadvantaged students and their families.
- Take action to **close the household-level technology and resource gap between disadvantaged and more privileged students**, while recognising that remote learning requires skilful teaching as well as appropriate technology.
- **Provide role clarity for teachers** and other professionals so that they understand their responsibilities for ensuring the learning continuity of disadvantaged students.
- Governments should **build coalitions with parents or caregivers and non-government organisations** to support continuity of learning for disadvantaged students.

## 1.1. What is academic recovery?

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The UNHCR Accelerated Education Working Group distinguishes between different levels of educational deprivation by the effects a period of educational disruption has on learners ([UNHCR AEWG, 2020](#)). It then recommends four types of approaches best suited to address those effects:

- Extending instructional time



- Catch-up programmes
- Remedial education
- Accelerated education programmes

Thus, an ‘academic recovery programme’ is a programme incorporating one or more of these approaches, seeking to mitigate the effects of learning loss and bring their competency levels up to the correct level for their age. A recovery programme may also involve supporting and strengthening the infrastructure and systems of teaching, including support to schools, teachers, families, and communities. Academic recovery programmes are also forward-looking, seeking to build resilience to future challenges.

## 1.2. Academic recovery in the OECS and the ARP

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The OECS region has been challenged significantly by the arrival of COVID-19, with the education sector facing difficulties which resulted in the closing of schools and disruption to regular learning schedules for thousands of students and teachers. The pandemic has also exacerbated existing challenges and difficulties facing the sector, such as:

- The threat of natural hazards and environmental crises—such as hurricanes, flooding, and volcanic activity—leading to schooling interruptions;
- Lower academic performance and completion among boys;
- Inclusion challenges for disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs; and
- Insufficient resources and training for teachers to deliver online instruction.

Any academic recovery programme will need to consider these additional issues when addressing the challenge of COVID-19. It is with this in mind that the OECS Educational Development Management Unit (EDMU) published the OECS Education Sector Response and Recovery Strategy to COVID-19 ([↑OECS, 2020](#)) and have developed this Academic Recovery Programme (ARP). The ARP framework aims to improve student learning outcomes amid the ‘new normal’ of blended learning delivery and was designed to address the situation of four focus countries (Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). However, the ARP is not limited in geographical scope and is designed to be flexibly scaled across other OECS Member States as required.

## 1.3. Purpose

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This document is intended as a general-purpose overview for all education stakeholders with a close involvement in the oversight and implementation of the OECS ARP; it also offers an initial guide for teachers, principals, and other school management staff. It is not intended to be a set of prescriptive implementation instructions but to give a comprehensive understanding of the ARP framework and some indicative next steps taken by various stakeholders at different levels.

## 2. Implementing the Academic Recovery Programme

The ARP was designed following an extensive review of academic and publicly available literature on accelerated learning and academic recovery ([↑Haßler et al., 2021a](#)), as well as interviews with teachers, government officials, and other education stakeholders across the four focus countries of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines ([↑Haßler et al., 2021b](#)). Below is a step by step guide on how to implement the ARP.

### 2.1. Evidence-based design principles

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The following are the evidence-based design principles that have informed the ARP design ([↑Haßler et al., 2021a](#), [↑Haßler et al., 2021b](#)). These principles also need to inform the implementation of the ARP:

- D1. Face-to-face learning in a shared space is critical.** Technology can enhance but cannot replace direct teacher-student interaction. Therefore, it is important to ensure that students have direct face to face interactions with adults or peers in the learning space. Face to face interaction with teachers will meet both the social and academic needs of students. Parents also have an important role in supporting their child's learning. Still, it is not only adults whose presence can be helpful: siblings and fellow pupils can be an influential presence in increasing competence and confidence.
- D2. Recruit and train the instructors.** Regardless of how the ARP is delivered, teachers and instructors need to be supported. They need to understand the ARP features and provide ongoing support to apply evidence-based strategies to help low performers.
- D3. Design a comprehensive diagnostic assessment tool.** A comprehensive diagnostic assessment tool helps teachers and policymakers identify the students most in need of remedial education.
- D4. Use data to make decisions and track outcomes.** Responses and decision-making should be based on the best available data. Data collection is essential for monitoring and impact assessment, feeding into higher-level EMIS systems, which should identify and target vulnerable students.
- D5. Consider small-scale pilot experimentation before scaling the ARP.** Before nationwide or regional implementation, small-scale experiments and trials should be carried out locally in each of the focus countries.
- D6. Targeting and raising awareness.** Awareness-raising should involve collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that beneficiaries have access to

the programme. Engagement strategies should ensure beneficiaries know how to access the programme: parents and the community play an important role in facilitating this process.

- D7. Make the process participatory.** The ARP needs to involve and strengthen the commitment of the various stakeholders to have a greater chance of success.
- **Get teachers involved in the design process.** Teachers — and other school-based stakeholders — have a crucial role in the planning, delivery, and monitoring stages.
  - **Get parents involved.** The primary caregivers for children should be involved, particularly in implementing and monitoring the ARP.
  - **Listen to students.** Students are the ultimate beneficiaries: the programme needs to be adapted to their learning needs to ensure attendance and participation.
  - **Include disadvantaged groups and disabled students.** Effort must be made to ensure ‘silently excluded’ children are reached, including those from low-income communities and with special educational needs.
  - **Work with partners and contractors.** Partner organisations can bring a fresh perspective and secure access to specialist external resources.
- D8. Be flexible and consider students’ livelihoods.** The programme should be flexible enough to accommodate differences in students’ home lives — an accommodating school structure can be particularly supportive of students struggling in education.
- D9. Evolve pedagogical approaches.** Any ARP should improve students' learning outcomes in a system that may not have been optimal for students previously. EdTech is best used as part of a multimodal approach in combination with traditional resources.
- D10. The programme must give value for money.** The programme must cost-effectively reach intended beneficiaries, with additional consideration for scaling and ensuring tessellation with existing programmes and activities.
- D11. Ensure students have the resources needed to participate.** This is particularly important for low-income households and low-resourced schools.
- D12. Reduce class sizes.** Groups of 15 or fewer students enable better student learning outcomes, as do one-to-one tuition and peer tutoring approaches. In the OECS countries, current class sizes are more than 15; however, frequent small groups can facilitate peer tutoring and increase teacher student ratio to ensure that struggling students benefit from targeted instruction.

It is important to note that, as a user-centred programme, the form of the ARP implemented in each focus country may evolve with the evolving needs of learners and

the teachers who support them. However, the evidence-based design principles and goals of the Implementation Strategy remain the same.

Building off the evidence-based design principles, several additional factors were identified with considerable relevance to the design and implementation of the ARP:

- F1. Complement existing interventions.** The ARP will not displace existing programmes such as the Early Learners Programme (ELP) but will seek to build on the relevant aspects of those initiatives whilst complementing other existing structures such as the OECS Teacher Professional Development Model.<sup>1</sup>
- F2. Start with subjects where students face the most difficulties.** The foundational subjects of literacy and numeracy were identified as curriculum subjects because they also support the development of competency in other areas.
- F3. Focus on skill levels, not grades.** Given that the ARP seeks to reach the most vulnerable students, the programme focuses on ensuring minimum level competency in key subjects. Importantly, the ARP focuses on skills commensurate with Grades 1 to 3, but allows for support to be provided to older students who have not reached this level of competency.

During the design, principles on **teacher support (D2)** and participation of **parents (D7)** were emphasised. Teachers, as most present individuals in a child's day of schooling, will be supported to teach effectively in the new blended learning context of COVID-19. Parents will be given guidance on supporting their child's learning, with particular focus on parents in disadvantaged households or those with children with special educational needs.

When implementing a component of the ARP, the implementers should refer to these principles (D1-D12, F1-F3), asking questions such as: Are activities starting with small-scale implementation (D5)? Does this plan complement an existing initiative (F1)? Following the above principles, the ARP will increase the chance of being successful, and therefore leading to better outcomes for children.

## 2.2. Input components for the ARP

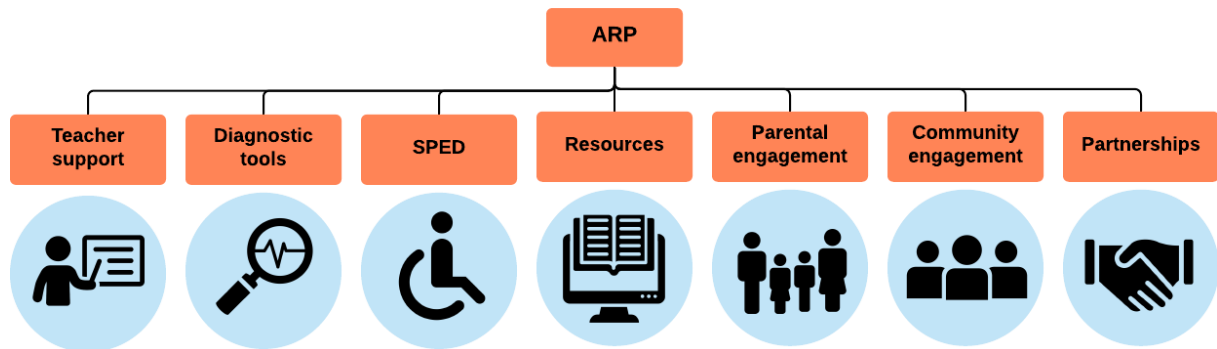
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Based on the findings from the literature review and stakeholder interviews, the design principles and implementation factors, the input components of the OECS ARP were selected for their relevance and adaptability.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pressroom.oecs.org/professional-development-in-the-oecs-gets-an-upgrade>

**Figure 1.** *Input components of the OECS ARP*

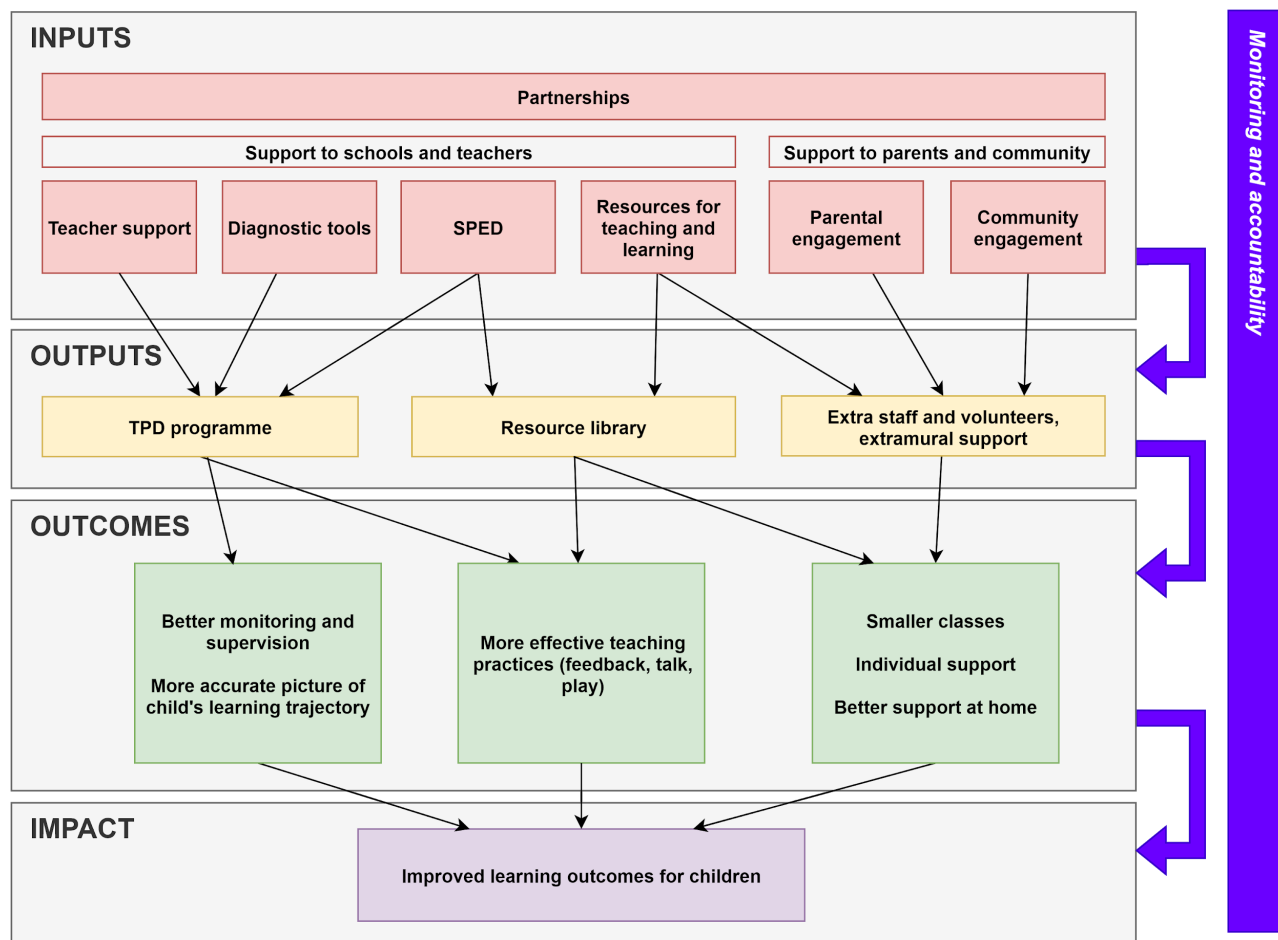


## 2.3. Pathways to recovery: Theory of Change

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Given the modular — but overlapping — nature of the ARP’s input components, decision makers have the option to give different weighting and emphasis to those components most relevant to the needs of learners in their country. These different pathways to recovery are strengthened by partnerships between schools, communities, families, and other organisations, and are underpinned by effective monitoring and accountability structures, which allow the ARP to be adapted to changing circumstances and learning needs. A couple of indicative examples are shown below.

**Figure 2.** *The Theory of Change for the ARP, with indicative pathway to recovery emphasising teacher professional development<sup>2</sup>*



## 2.4. Context-sensitive & step by step guide

It is important to note that the way the ARP will be implemented in each country will depend on the specific needs of that country, and that not all components will need to be delivered with equal weighting. The challenges, capacities, and availability of resources differ from country to country, and the ARP has been designed with this in mind: it is not a 'one-size-fits-all' programme.

Those seeking to implement the ARP in their country will first have to take stock of the situation with reference to each of the ARP's components. They must consider the individual challenges related to each component and how they overlap before determining the best balance and focus of the combined components. This will not only form the basis for ARP implementation, but will also aid the establishment of a solid monitoring framework, which will be integral to programme monitoring, adaptation, and resilience.

<sup>2</sup> An enlarged version of this diagram can be found in Appendix 1.

Although the ARP respects the needs and situations of individual member states, there is a recommended step by step implementation guide that each country should follow to harness the highest benefits of the ARP.

The implementation materials are detailed in the [↑concept note for implementation](#) and the associated planning tools.

## 3. Component 1. Supporting teachers and instructors

Teachers are at the forefront of executing the ARP and therefore warrant support in various ways to effectively implement the programme. Their efforts will ensure that gaps in learning are adequately addressed and that students — with the engaged support of their families — are better equipped to achieve set learning outcomes. At scale, one of the most effective ways of doing this is through a structured programme of teacher professional development (TPD).

Within the new blended learning context in which students and teachers find themselves, much emphasis has been placed on the role of educational technology (EdTech) in supporting and enhancing learning outcomes in children. However, the beneficial effects of EdTech are more pronounced in older children (typically of secondary school age), and the ARP focuses on skill levels commensurate with Grades 1-3, where EdTech may not be that beneficial. Secondly, the ARP aims in particular to support disadvantaged children and those most vulnerable to significant learning loss. For these children, EdTech-focused approaches do not present the most effective or cost-efficient solution.

Nevertheless, the nature of teaching and learning in the context of a pandemic has necessitated a minimum use of EdTech for most learners and their families. The ARP has been designed to accommodate for this but does not recommend a pervasive over-reliance on EdTech across the components as they are implemented.

### 3.1. Why is this component important to the ARP?

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While the proverb that ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ still rings true, it is undeniable that teachers are the most important figures in a child’s education outside of the home. This is why teachers are key to implementing the ARP. Following extensive research sessions with ministry staff workers and teachers, the decision was made that certain alternatives would not be appropriate as parts of this component. Options such as extending the school day would not be suitable for various reasons, including children getting tired and lack of transport to get children back to their homes. The idea of undertaking a summer school was likewise discarded because this would mean delaying academic recovery to the school summer holidays, and the logistical and financial investments required presented poor value for money in terms of academic recovery. It emerged that the most suitable way to implement the ARP was by engaging teachers during their existing time in school. In other words, it was deemed appropriate to



attempt to change teaching practices to be more focused on the requirements of the pandemic, and in particular, the need for academic recovery.<sup>3</sup>

In order to support teachers a number of TPD sessions have been designed, to maintain student learning outcomes and facilitate recovery where those outcomes are not being met. Teacher competencies to effectively deliver content in a blended learning format, significant learning loss, and inconsistent parental support were among the key issues revealed in meetings and discussions with teachers and ministry staff. As programme implementation progresses, it is expected that learning gaps will lessen, teacher competencies will be improved, parents will understand how to effectively support their children at home and partner with teachers. It is expected that these changes, if implemented effectively, will guarantee long-lasting changes to the education system in participating countries.

The ARP framework that is presented here focuses primarily on academic recovery in lower primary grades, targeting the skills acquisition in basic literacy and numeracy. For younger children these are particularly difficult to learn in blended contexts or online.

With the COVID-19 pandemic still ongoing there will almost inevitably be future needs to close schools for periods of time. Where possible and advisable given the overall constraints of the situation, taking a differentiated approach to the closure of schools is strongly suggested. Under such an approach, school closures should be primarily undertaken for those children that have a greater opportunity to benefit from learning in blended ways or learning online. Where children are unable to properly benefit from blended or online learning approaches, schools should only be closed with great caution. In particular, this means that lower primary school grades should be kept open if at all possible. Blended and online learning in secondary school grades is more practicable and beneficial: it is, therefore, more feasible to close secondary schools and to transition to these approaches to learning.

However, the efficacy of online learning for a child to learn online does not depend solely on their age, but also on their socioeconomic situation. Therefore, as is practiced in many countries around the world, it may not be advisable to close entire grades, but instead to make specific provisions for certain children to continue to attend school; this would include children of key workers, children from socioeconomically disadvantaged households, and children with disabilities and special educational needs (as long as they are not at greater risk from COVID-19 by attending school in-person).

## 3.2. Teaching practices for academic recovery

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A wide range of teaching practices were considered as part of the literature review underpinning the design of the ARP framework ([Haßler, et al., 2021a](#)). Other large-scale reviews of teaching practices for academic recovery have been conducted, such as by the

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<sup>3</sup> For a further discussion of the evidence base on effective academic recovery options, see [Haßler, et al. \(2021a\)](#).

Education Endowment Foundation in the UK: their analyses have been condensed into two toolkits, aimed respectively at children aged 0–5 years and 5–16 years old. Summarised in Appendix 2, these toolkits demonstrate the possibility for significant acceleration of education by focusing on *effective* teaching practices. The following were found to be moderately to highly impactful at a much lower cost:

- Communication and language approaches★
- Early numeracy approaches★
- Play-based learning★
- Self-regulation strategies★
- Early literacy approaches★
- Feedback★★
- Metacognition and self-regulation★★
- Reading comprehension strategies★★
- Mastery learning★★
- Collaborative learning★★
- Oral language interventions★★
- Peer tutoring★★

In this list, items from the early years toolkit are labeled with ★, while items from the 5–16 toolkit are labeled with ★★. While the Education Endowment Foundation insights are gradually being internationalised, UK-based evidence still plays an important role. Though this should not change much about the impact of different interventions, the assessment of costs may be different if considered in the case of OECS Member States. For example, the costs for digital technology in the UK need just to cover school-based costs; in countries that have poorer infrastructure, the costs are likely to be higher.

As well as considering what interventions are effective, it is also important to note which interventions are particularly ineffective. For example extending school hours was found to provide low impact for a high cost, strongly suggesting that this is not a favourable intervention. The setting of homework is ineffective in primary school, but can be effective in secondary school. While this insight is based only on emerging evidence, it makes intuitive sense: older children are more able to complete tasks independently. Two types of interventions for which there is significant room for improvement across the OECS: oral language interventions (talk), and play-based learning. More information on these can be found in Appendix 6.

### 3.2.1. Supporting teachers and instructors: Activities

As noted above, in order to introduce new teaching practices, teacher professional development is needed. Appropriate teacher professional development is widely recognised as highly impactful in improving student learning outcomes ([↑Hattie, 2009](#); [↑Hattie, 2012](#)).

However, it is important that teacher professional development follows recognised evidence-based approaches. The following principles have been identified ([↑Allier-Gagneur et al., 2020](#)):

1. Encourage teachers to focus on their pupils' learning;
2. Share effective practices with teachers using modelling;

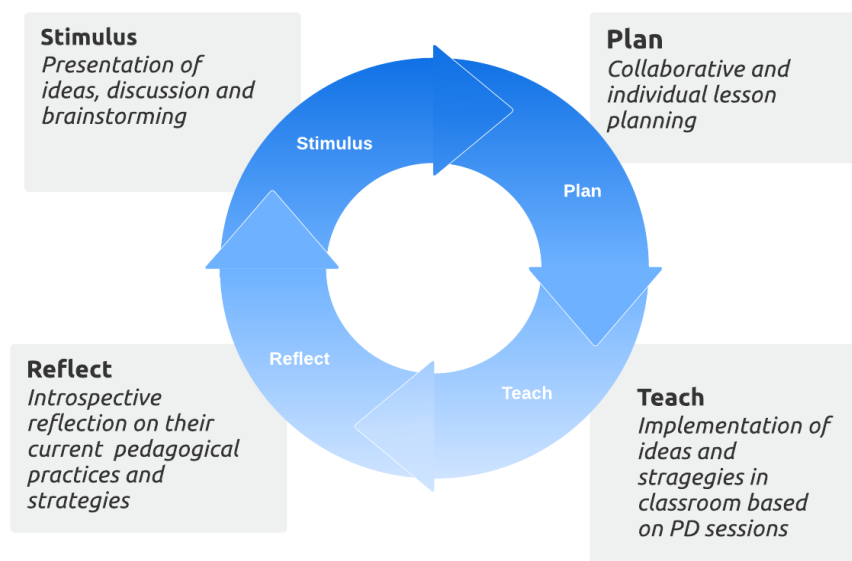
3. Acknowledge and build on teachers' existing knowledge, views, and experiences;
4. Focus on developing practical subject pedagogy rather than theoretical general pedagogy;
5. Empower teachers to become reflective practitioners and structure teacher education around practice-based cycles of trial and refinement;
6. Incorporate peer support;
7. Ensure teacher education programmes motivate teachers;
8. Prioritise school-based teacher education;
9. Schedule regular, ongoing teacher education;
10. Provide supporting teaching and learning materials;
11. Ensure support from school leaders;
12. Create a coherent policy environment.

However, much teacher professional development does not follow evidence-based approaches and thus remains ineffective ([Popova et al., 2018](#)). A pilot TPD programme has been designed, with six sessions developed and trialled in collaboration with some early grade teachers in the region. These sessions are specifically tailored to academic recovery programmes and blended learning contexts.

### 3.2.2. Methodology for TPD Sessions

The sessions are designed using the Stimulus-Plan-Teach-Reflect methodology, enabling teachers to take a reflective stance on their teaching practices. This provides an opportunity for teachers to re-evaluate their beliefs about teaching and learning and their alignment with actual classroom practice, ultimately improving their practice.

**Figure 3.** *The cycle of Stimulus-Plan-Teach-Reflect*



### 3.2.3. Session delivery

The sessions will be delivered by facilitators, who are usually staff members in a particular school. To ensure self- and peer-reflection, the facilitator will be paired with another facilitator in a different school to share experiences and evaluate the session delivery. Facilitators will also be provided with slides that they could use along with the handbook to deliver each session. The facilitators will

- begin each session with a welcome;
- lead a reflection on teaching for the past week;
- outline the current session's objectives;
- guide teachers through the stimulus, which is the main activity for each session;
- support teachers during collaborative lesson planning; and
- close each session.

During the session's close, the facilitator reminds teachers to complete pre-session and homework tasks in preparation for the next week's session. To ensure each session's effective delivery, facilitators will be provided with training — including trailing the materials with teachers — prior to the full TPD schedule's commencement. They will also receive training on how to navigate the technology needed to effectively deliver the sessions given their time constraints. Through this training, facilitators will work on time management, best practices to deliver the sessions, and how to improvise for some of the challenges that they will encounter during session delivery.

Below is an envisaged list of sessions that will comprise the full TPD schedule that can be developed.

**Table 1.** *TPD sessions*

No.	Title	Focus
1	TPD for ARP	TPD's relevance to academic recovery
2	The OECS Professional Development Model	Approach to TPD in the OECS and its relevance to academic recovery
3	Introduction to Assessment for Learning	Using AFL in academic recovery
4	Assessment for Learning 1	Using AFL in academic recovery
5	Assessment for Learning 2	Using AFL in academic recovery
6	Diagnostic Assessments 1	Undertaking diagnostic assessments
7	Open Educational Resources 1	Selecting resources to address learning gaps for most affected students
8	Summative Assessment (Part 1)	Determining the academic recovery need of individual students

9	Formative Assessment	Determining the academic recovery need of individual students
10	Student Self-Assessment	Promoting metacognition and self-regulation
11	Student Peer-Assessment	Promoting metacognition and self-regulation for academic recovery
12	Your Online Classroom 1 (Google Classroom/Zoom/Teams)	Integrating effective teaching practices into online teaching and learning
13	Diagnostic Assessments 2	Learning from earlier diagnostic assessment — national results
14	SPED students	Identifying mild learning disabilities and referral systems
15	Talk for Learning 1	Whole-class & small group dialogue
16	Play 1	Play in the early years
17	Open Educational Resources 2	Selecting resources to address learning gaps for most affected students
18	Talk for Learning 2	Supporting academic recovery through better questioning
19	Play 2	Play in the early years and academic recovery
20	Your Online Classroom 2 (Google Classroom/Zoom/Teams)	Integrating effective teaching practices into online teaching and learning

### 3.3. Recommended next steps

For details on implementation, please consult the [↑concept note for implementation](#) and the associated planning tools. The table below is also available in [↑spreadsheet format](#), including details on resourcing and timing.

Ministry of Education / EDMU		
1.1.1	Planning psychosocial and social support for teaching staff and instructors	Determine the nature of the support that will be provided, establish frequency and plan how it will be monitored.
1.1.2	Establish support network for teachers	Establish a network for teachers to support each other, promote sharing good practice, emotional support for teachers and problem solving. For example, such a network could consist of a set of WhatsApp groups, enabling teachers to reach out to each other.

1.1.3	TPD - Session plans	<p>The session plans available in this OECS ARP need to be tailored to suit the local context, for remote or face-to-face delivery. Develop at least 20 sessions for utilisation between May 2021 and February 2022.</p> <p>Session plans need to include materials on diagnostic testing and SPED, as well as on how to utilise new teaching resources, for both face-to-face teaching as well as remote learning. Key pedagogical techniques such as pair tutoring, talk, and play should be included.</p>
1.1.4	Implementing psychosocial / social support for teaching staff and instructors	Provision of counselling sessions or a counselling hotline to enable teachers deal better with the crisis.

### School administrators and principals

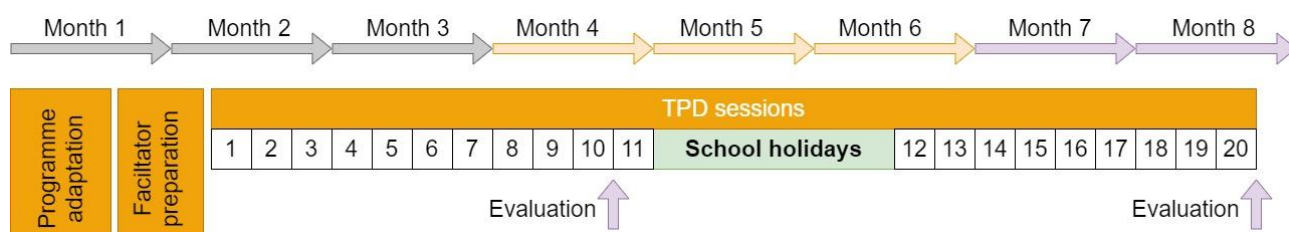
1.2.1	TPD - Facilitator selection	Two peer-facilitators need to be selected in each school. These individuals should be enthusiastic and dedicated. They will implement the rollout of these school-based TPD. Each school should ensure that their pair of facilitators is paired with another pair from a different school. School management needs to oversee the selection and pairing process.
1.2.2	TPD - Planning	<p>Each district should make decisions about when and how the sessions will take place (for example, after the school day, or during part of an abbreviated school day)</p> <p>Sessions should be either weekly or fortnightly. We recommend starting with weekly sessions, with the option for moving to fortnightly sessions later on.</p> <p>Principals should report the selected session dates to the relevant district or national coordinators.</p> <p>Develop contingency plans e.g. for technical issues / equipment failure (such as distributing materials via phone or hard copy in advance, using mobile networks instead of wifi etc.)</p>

1.2.3	TPD - Material production and distribution	Decisions regarding how the ARP materials will be supplied should be discussed. Districts should decide whether handbooks will be printed or soft copies will be made available to teachers and facilitators. Also, each district should ensure that schools have the necessary equipment that facilitators should use to deliver the content. A contingency plan should be in place for equipment failure.
1.2.4	TPD - Evaluation	<p>Plan monitoring and evaluation of teacher performance after TPD. This should include self-evaluation as well as a summative evaluation at school level.</p> <p>Set up a web-based form, through which facilitators and teachers can report participation in - and outcomes of - the sessions.</p> <p>EDMU to analyse and review data.</p> <p>EDMU to feed results of analysis back to schools.</p>
<b>Teachers</b>		
1.3.1	TPD - Co-facilitation and delivery	Teachers to co-facilitate TPD sessions, and to attend sessions regularly

### 3.4. Indicative sequencing and timeline

The teacher support component's timing will depend on the weighting and emphasis it is given within the ARP framework. However, as the TPD sessions are designed to be implemented on a regular basis, they should be scheduled carefully, bearing in mind the timing of school holidays and existing TPD schedules.

**Figure 4.** *Indicative timeline of key teacher support activities*



## 4. Component 2. Diagnostic tools

Component 1 of the ARP concerns diagnostic tools. Effective responses to academic challenges cannot be implemented without evidence-based decision making. Diagnostic tests of student performance to identify progress and challenges are informally undertaken by teachers at a classroom level on a daily basis, but the use of diagnostic tools on a broader scale is crucial to ascertain where students are in their learning; particularly for the early grades who were most affected by the transition to online learning.

### 4.1. Why is this component important to the ARP?

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Diagnostic tests play a crucial role in the broader monitoring efforts of educators and education stakeholders (see overlaps with Section 10). More immediately, for the many students not reached during the pandemic, diagnostic assessments are necessary to determine what progress they are making in their learning.

For some samples of diagnostic tools, see:

- [Diagnostic Reading Analysis](#);
- *Literacy for Adolescents: Transforming Teaching and Content Learning for the Twenty-First Century* ([Morocco et al., 2008](#));
- [Rising Stars](#) - Books, resources, and software for teachers;
- [Uwezo Kenya National Assessment 2014 Test Booklet](#) ([Uwezo Kenya, 2014](#)); and
- Uwezo Kenya's comprehensive collection of [assessment tools](#).

### 4.2. Activities

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Diagnostic tests should be implemented during **month 1** of the ARP. This is to ensure early detection of students' learning needs. Incorporated into the TPD materials is guidance on the use of diagnostic tools to inform pre-teaching, teaching, and re-teaching practices. These tools allow for data-informed analysis of learning outcomes and student needs, particularly for identifying those students who need support in reaching the minimum competencies being taught.

The OECS member states already have diagnostic tools in the form of a battery of tests widely used to ascertain learning among students. The ARP framework's guidance also provides other suggestions for diagnostic activities that teachers can use in the blended learning environment. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers systematically use diagnostic tools to assess where students are before introducing new units or topics.



As suggested by the guide, pre-teaching and reteaching activities should be used in concert with diagnostic tests. During pre-teaching, gaps in learning are identified and addressed before introducing new topics. Similarly, data from diagnostic tests can be used to reteach concepts that students have not mastered.

### 4.3. Recommended next steps

For details on implementation, please consult the [↑concept note for implementation](#) and the associated planning tools.

Ministry of Education / EDMU		
2.1.1.	Monitoring of diagnostic test data	<p>Ensure that, from the earliest stages, diagnostic test data is sufficiently incorporated into monitoring frameworks.</p> <p>The EDMU needs to review their respective national education monitoring frameworks and decide on key indicators (e.g., student attendance, student performance, teacher qualifications and capabilities, etc).</p>
Teachers		
2.2.1	Planning and administering diagnostic tests	Plan which tests will be used, when they will be used, how results will be graded / evaluated, and how results will be used to identify struggling students in particular. Plan frequency of test scheduling. Where necessary, update or adapt new diagnostic tests.
2.2.2	Incorporate test results into lesson plans and pre- and reteaching activities	<p>During TPD sessions and otherwise, teachers devise lesson activities and lesson plans, incorporating diagnostic analysis to address gaps and offer differentiation (e.g. through pre- and reteaching activities).</p> <p>Combine TPD session lessons on diagnostic tools with own insights from previous observations, and consider how to carry out these activities in both face-to-face and blended learning environments.</p>
2.2.3	Building diagnostic tests for SPED	SPED teachers and teachers who teach SPED students need support. Diagnostic tests must be developed or adapted which take account of the needs and learning styles of SPED students.

2.2.4	Delivery of TPD on diagnostic tests	TPD sessions on diagnostic teaching sessions designed and delivered to teachers. This must include diagnostic tests for SPED students
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## 5. Component 3. Special education and disability (SPED)

This component focuses on the consideration of special educational needs and disability within the context of academic recovery. Children with special education needs in the OECS member states are arguably the most disadvantaged group of students and have missed out on education the most during the pandemic.

### 5.1. Why is this component important to the ARP?

It does appear that even before the arrival of COVID-19, adequate provision for SPED students was not always available. Discussions with teachers and education officials in the member states indicate minimal support — without specialist resources or support services — for children with disabilities during the pandemic ([Haßler et al., 2021b](#)). Therefore, children with special educational needs and disabilities need to be a primary target group of this ARP and opportunities to offer alternative approaches for students with special education needs are a significant part of the ARP. This complements the efforts to build back better and more resilient institutions for children with special education needs.

For the purpose of the ARP, the term ‘SPED students’ will include children experiencing the following disorders ([Education 2018](#)):

<b>Autistic spectrum</b>	Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Asperger's Syndrome (ASP), Autism (AUT)
<b>Emotional and behavioural disorder</b>	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD, EBSD, and SEBD), Challenging Behaviour (CB)
<b>Learning difficulties</b>	General Learning Difficulties (GLD), Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Learning Difficulties (LD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), Severe and Complex Learning Difficulties (SCLD)
<b>Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia</b>	Dyslexia (DYSL), Dyscalculia (DYSC), Dyspraxia (DYSP), Dysgraphia (DYSG), Specific Learning Difficulties (SPLD) Speech & Language Difficulties (SP&LD)
<b>Deafness</b>	Hearing Impairment (HI), Partially Hearing (Phe)
<b>Visual impairment</b>	No agreed definition, but the term covers a range of conditions

<b>Epilepsy</b>	-
<b>Others</b>	Down's Syndrome, Gifted Children, Muscular Dystrophy, Spina Bifida, Cerebral Palsy (CP), Tourette's Syndrome (TOU)

## 5.2. The importance of referral systems for SPED

Despite the obvious differentiation and classification of these disorders, in most cases, they are not as obvious or easy to identify. This is usually the case with mild conditions, such as moderate learning or intellectual disabilities and mild emotional disturbance. A major flaw made by most countries in special education policy is assuming that deviations from modal characteristics are valid indicators of a 'handicap' rather than a function of how and why one chooses to measure these characteristics ([Gerber & Semmel, 2009](#)).

Bearing this in mind, classroom teachers have a very instrumental role to play in identifying students with mild disabilities as they are usually the first to come in contact with these children and are in the best position to determine the 'teachability' of the child. It is therefore strongly recommended that assessment functions for SPED children should be carried out on the school site by the teacher in collaboration with the school counsellor ([Gerber & Semmel, 2009](#)).

## 5.3. Key underlying considerations

The COVID Trauma Response Working Group ([COVID Trauma Response Working Group, 2020](#)) proposes the following guidelines when working with children, young people, and families to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- *Don't make assumptions. Highly stressful situations can bring out both difficulties and strengths that were not obvious beforehand; risks may be(come) hidden, or families may come together in unexpected ways.*
- *Ensure basic needs are met, including a balanced sleep/wake pattern, nutrition, and basic safety.*
- *Be aware that stress can be expressed differently by children of different ages or differently by children of the same age. If you're not sure how a young person is feeling, ask them.*
- *High levels of stress can impede effective communication between services. It may be worth considering increasing information sharing with other professionals following contact with children, young people, and their families.*
- *Pay particular attention to the needs of children and family from Minority Ethnic communities.*
- *A perceived sense of safeness will help children and young people cope with ongoing uncertainty, support greater openness about thoughts and feelings, and form closer social connections. This will help protect against later posttraumatic distress, mental*

*health difficulties, and prolonged experiences of grief.*

### 5.3.1. A note on telehealth

The term ‘telehealth’ describes the use of technology for the distance provision of healthcare, collaborating with—or even replacing—in-person care ([↑Martinelli et al., 2020](#)). Despite being a distanced approach, telehealth can be used to treat several mental health conditions in children, including:

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Anxiety (including selective mutism, separation anxiety, social anxiety and phobias)
- Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Behaviour problems
- Bipolar disorder
- Depression
- Developmental disorders
- Eating disorders
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Suicidality and self-harm
- Substance abuse disorders
- Trauma and stress (including post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD)

The nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has been recognised as exacerbating existing mental health conditions in adults and children. Yet a recent report by the Child Mind Institute concluded that telehealth “offers an efficient way to support the mental health needs of children, especially those who may not be able to access in-person care” ([↑Martinelli et al., 2020, p.2](#)). Synergies between respective ministries of health and education should be developed to ensure that children identified as affected by mental health or SPED conditions can be supported to access telehealth services.

### 5.3.2. The role of counsellors in psychosocial and emotional wellbeing

An important role in addressing mental health and wellbeing is that of the counsellor. During interviews with teachers, many revealed that they were stressed out and needed attention for their emotional wellbeing. They also pointed out that some of their students were emotionally drained as a result of the pandemic. Without paying attention to emotional well being, learning does not take place as expected. [↑Tyng et al. \(2017\)](#) argue that cognitive and emotional faculties are an integral part of the learning process. Therefore, it is prudent to attend to both.

In addition to the above, the counsellor’s role becomes more critical in crisis situations like the current pandemic. [↑Stevens & Ellerbrock \(1995\)](#) note that counselling is necessary to restore psychological equilibrium when individuals feel overwhelmed by circumstance. Counsellors can provide multiple beneficial services:

- Assisting parents in providing support for their students by providing them with resources on strategies to support their children’s emotional wellbeing as they learn at home.

- Assisting teachers in managing stress-related issues both personally and for their students.
- Assisting students in managing social, emotional, and psychological challenges.
- Providing guidance for classroom teachers and principals on engaging students and families who have been acutely affected by the pandemic.
- Providing practical steps and strategies to cope with issues arising from the pandemic and other factors.

Below are some tips on how counsellors can help during the pandemic and how to engage them effectively:

1. [School Counselors and COVID-19](#) (↑Boudreau, 2020)
2. [COVID-19's Effect on Students: How School Counselors Rise to the Rescue](#) (↑Pincus et al., 2020)
3. [School counselling in the time of the coronavirus](#) (↑Meyers, 2020)
4. [Guidance for Teachers and Counselors during COVID-19 and Other Crises](#) (↑Rock & Gilgoff, 2020)

## 5.4. Quality-first teaching approaches for SPED areas of need

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Below is a list of some needs that SPED teachers should prioritise within the context of the ARP:

- Cognition and learning needs
- Communication and interaction needs
- Social, emotional and mental health needs
- Physical and sensory needs (including visual and hearing needs)

For more practical information and advice, see also these useful resources:

- *'Happier in his own clothes': Post-pandemic Possibilities for Education for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities* (↑Shepherd et al., 2021)
- Manuela Molina's *COVIBOOK* (↑Molina Cruz, 2020)

## 5.5. Activities

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Part of the difficulty in supporting children with SPED needs is in identifying them. Where a process has not been established for doing this, one should be established and formalised at a national level (see Appendix 4). Records of these children and their specific difficulties should be kept and shared with the relevant teachers and school management staff as those children progress through the education system: this will allow a more consistent level of support when changing teachers/schools. Support plans for SPED students should also be formulated as part of monitoring activities (see

Appendix 5 for a template). Training should also be provided to teachers on referral decisions and referral procedures (see Appendices 3 and 4).

## 5.6. Recommended next steps

For details on implementation, please consult the [concept note for implementation](#) and the associated planning tools. The table below is also available in [spreadsheet format](#), including details on resourcing and timing.

The following steps are recommended to address the needs of children with special education needs:

Ministry of Education / EDMU		
3.2.1	Collaborate with MoE on diagnosis	Determine whether MoH staff can support diagnosing SPED students.
3.2.2	Collaborate with MoE on strategy	Work collaboratively with MoE to define / refine the SPED referral strategy.
3.2.3	Contribute to designing of TPD	Support the design and delivery of SPED sessions (especially those linked with identifying disabilities).
3.2.4	Awareness campaign rollout	<p>Work collaboratively with parents and schools to sensitise them about disabilities and reduce stigma.</p> <p>The awareness campaign could utilise TV, radio and newspapers. For example, radio clips could be produced and broadcast and 'advertisements' could be taken out in newspapers.</p>
School administrators and principal		
3.3.1	Engage with SPED identification processes	Follow up on referrals of cases of students with suspected SPED needs, and facilitate connection with relevant specialists as needed.
3.3.2	Partnerships with SPED specialists and organisations	Establish strategic partnerships with specialist SPED schools to enable resource sharing, as well as with advocacy and support organisations such as Disabled Peoples' International North America and the Caribbean.
3.3.3	Keep records of SPED students	Maintain a record of students with SPED needs progress through the education system, allowing teachers to hand over and ensure a proper level of support.
Teachers		

3.4.1	SPED student evaluation / planning	<p>Develop co planning and co teaching schedules with support staff</p> <p>Establish time to plan and evaluate teaching, student performance and next steps</p> <p>Plan monitoring and evaluation frameworks for ongoing evaluation and monitoring</p> <p>Evaluate the effectiveness of peer tutoring, parental engagement, assessment ect.</p> <p>Decide on the framework for evaluating the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation activities in the past 2 months</p> <p>Devise a plan for next steps</p>
3.4.2	Engaging parents of SPED students	<p>Devise plan to engage all parents of SPED students and develop novel means to involve those who are reluctant to participate.</p> <p>Devise a training plan for parents. One that will equip them with necessary skills to support their children at home.</p> <p>In cases where parents are unable to support their children, plan for an alternative form of support</p>
3.4.3	Supporting SPED students	<p>Consider how peer relationships, tutoring and mentoring for SPED students can supplement the activity of specialist teachers.</p>
3.4.4	Participate in TPD sessions	<p>Some of the TPD sessions focus on support for SPED students.</p> <p>In particular, those sessions would focus on differentiation (planning lessons and small group activities) the various learning needs of SPED students.</p>
3.4.5	Keep records, use support plans and referrals	<p>Contribute to record-keeping and implement support plans as necessary. Understand and use referral mechanisms where necessary.</p>
3.4.6	Source for content online	<p>Source for open-source content for SPED students and integrate into lessons plans.</p>
3.4.7	Administer diagnostic tests and deliver feedback	<p>Administer diagnostic tests to assess children's learning progress. Provide regular feedback to students.</p>



## 6. Component 4. Resource library: Open Educational Resources

Component 4 focuses on the provision of adequate resources for academic recovery. Educational resources are part of the essential ingredients needed for education ([Piper et al., 2018](#)).

### 6.1. Why is this component important to the ARP?

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Finding, creating and curating the right content (context-relevant and relatable) required to engage young learners plays a pivotal role in determining the ARP's success. With the appropriate content, instructors may be able to identify the weaknesses in student learning and adequately address them. Also, some resource platforms have dual online and offline functionality, allowing for better adaptation to the 'new normal' of blended learning and uncertain outlooks as to how much time students will spend physically in schools.

#### 6.1.1. The importance of Open Educational Resources (OER)<sup>4</sup>

The [Creative Commons licences](#) are a commonly used legal framework, and are considered to be an essential feature of OER. By using the same legal framework, different OER become interoperable, and can be remixed. Creative Commons licenses pose various conditions, such as attribution, permission to make commercial use, to share only without adaptation (no derivatives), or to share only under the same Creative Commons licence ('share alike'). Each licence is presented in formal legal language, with attention to legal jurisdictions around the world, and is also presented in a simple summary in non-specialist language. Each licence is represented by an icon, supporting easy recognition and uptake.

There are numerous resources available that describe how Open Educational Resources work ([Haßler, et al., 2015](#) and references therein; [Haßler, 2016](#)).

#### 6.1.2. The importance of curriculum alignment<sup>5</sup>

Curricular alignment here refers to the process of categorising diverse digital materials (from a variety of sources and organised based on the logic of their creators) according to their applicability to curricular objectives within a given country curriculum. The process is especially important for learning management systems, platforms, and repositories that rely on using digital materials from different sources to fulfill needs

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<sup>4</sup> This section reuses content from [Haßler, et al. \(2015\)](#), Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International.

<sup>5</sup> This section reuses content from [Chandra \(2020\)](#), Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International.

formerly met by a textbook — a single source, created by one publisher to the specifications of the official curriculum.

Most collections of digital resources, particularly those created outside a designated country or classroom context, are non-aligned by default. Alignment makes educational content libraries usable by teachers and boosts their performance on most usability metrics of digital content, and is the key preparation step needed to ensure that digital materials are as easy to use as textbooks. In the area of OER research and adoption, many researchers have discovered that alignment is not only key to enhancing the discoverability of resources, but a critical component in their vetting, enabling reviewers to ensure that the unfamiliar library is actually covering all the same material as the existing textbook or other mandated resource.

Around the world, educators might give feedback or speak about the need for curricular alignment of content, without explicitly naming it as such. Where digital learning resources are not aligned, educators could describe challenges related to assessing relevance, communicating curriculum compliance, discovering the right resources, planning lessons, and assessing knowledge. Alignment addresses many of these concerns by matching the structure, vocabulary, navigation, and assessment mechanism of diverse materials to the ways in which a curriculum encourages educators to frame them, and hence saves educators' time in drawing these equivalences themselves.

## 6.2. Activities

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A resource library needs to be developed and adapted — with teachers' input — for use both locally and throughout the region. This resource library should be based on the principles of 'open': open-source and open-access materials that can be retained, reused, revised, and redistributed within the public domain (using Creative Commons licensing). It will also ensure that the resources needed to design and maintain the library can be reduced, as relying on proprietary, paid-for third-party software can be very costly. The library will provide online resources and other materials that teachers can access to deliver a range of content. The resource library also provides material useful for SPED students (who have been the most affected during the pandemic). In particular, access to open education resource platforms—like Kolibri—provide teachers with a range of diverse resources that are readily available for use and can also be customised to meet various learning needs. It is imperative to remember that whatever system is decided upon should not undermine existing platforms such as MStar.

## 6.3. Recommended next steps

For details on implementation, please consult the [↑concept note for implementation](#) and the associated planning tools. The following steps are suggested to set up an ARP resource library:

Ministry of Education/EDMU		
4.1.1	Content inventory	Carry out a content inventory of all the relevant content existing and identify content gaps.
4.1.2	Content sourcing	Establishing a database of all readily available content (OER where possible).
4.1.3	Review content	Review all the content collected on the basis of cultural relevance, quality and curriculum alignment.
4.1.4	Content curation and alignment	Based on the review exercise, align content to the different subjects in the curriculum and upload it to a shared platform (such as the OECS ELP platform or Kolibri) which teachers and learners can access. Content should contain materials adapted for SPED students, as well as materials on pair tutoring, talk, and play.
4.1.5	Material development	For subjects where suitable content is not available online, instructional designers can be hired—or recruited as volunteers—to create relevant content. Given its time- and resource-intensive nature, this process should only be undertaken where appropriate content is not already available.
School administrators and principals		
4.2.1	Collate required inventory of resources	Compile a required inventory of all resources required by teachers, and review existing resources available to them
4.2.2	Resource allocation and pooling	Develop resource budget and plan allocation of resources. Consider whether pooling / sharing resources with other schools may be an effective solution.
4.2.3	Test OERs and ensure teacher competency	Before launching OERs, ensure that teachers are all competent in their use, and support them where this competency needs developing.
Teachers		
4.3.1	Resource inventory and allocation	Compile a list of resources that you will need (including both online and offline resources)

4.3.2	Resource storage and access management	Teachers need to support each other in use of resources. Ensure that all teachers in the school have access to the content repository.
4.3.3	Ensure safeguarding of students and student information	Where students access online learning environments, ensure that students are using safe logins. Make children aware of some of the risks of accessing content online.

## 7. Component 5. Engaging and supporting parents

Component 5 focuses on engaging and supporting parents. Within the new context of blended learning and homeschooling, parents have an even more important role than before in supporting their child's learning. Parental involvement entails ensuring children show up to lessons, ensuring children do their assignments, and knowing who to reach for assistance.

### 7.1. Why is this component important to the ARP?

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Parents and guardians are the primary caregivers for children and, as such, require support. In the wake of the pandemic, parental engagement is even more crucial as parents are better positioned to encourage their children to attend sessions and provide some of the resources required to participate in the programme ([↑Friedman, 2010](#); [↑Hatton et al., 1996](#)). Therefore, parental engagement will play a pivotal role in determining the success of the ARP ([↑Friedman, 2010](#)).

For most parents, their responsibilities have increased because of the distance learning programmes put in place following the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, parents must be given support to rise to their new role within the context of the ARP, including the new responsibilities and activities required of them. Many factors may affect a parent's ability to provide adequate support for their child. Thus, provisions must be made to mitigate some of the factors more relevant to the success of the ARP.

This point is especially salient given the observations made by teachers who suggested that parents and students needed support for their emotional and psychological wellbeing during the pandemic. Given this reality, academic recovery would be incomplete without considering the emotional and psychological wellbeing of teachers and students and their families.

### 7.2. Activities

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A parental engagement resource has been developed — the [↑ARP Parents' Resource](#) — which briefly outlines the role parents can play in supporting the ARP to ensure learning continuity for their children. The resource provides practical guidance on various ways that parents can support their children's education at home and at school during the ARP implementation and beyond. The guidelines cover 10 key areas that support parents with their children's learning, whether in school or at home, outlined in the table below. The resource also provides some useful websites which parents can access to assist their children at home.

Table 2: Guidelines for parental involvement

Topic number	Description
1	Staying in touch with your child's instructor
2	Connecting with other parents with children in the same class as yours
3	Creating a routine for your child
4	Assignment submission and assistance
5	Catering to your child's emotional wellbeing
6	Modelling and demonstrating difficult concepts
7	Seeking feedback from and partnership with the teacher
8	Listen to your child and their teacher
9	Asking for help
10	Making use of all resources

It is worth mentioning that these guidelines were developed following conversations and interviews with teachers. Therefore, these are guidelines on how parents can support teachers to achieve the ARP outcomes. Further engagement activities need to be undertaken directly with parents to understand their ongoing concerns and broaden awareness of — and engagement with — the ARP, such as through a coordinated media campaign and parent-teacher associations. These campaigns can also disseminate existing publicly available information, such as the International Play Association's [guidance for parents and carers](#) (↑Casey, 2020).

**IPA Play in Crisis:  
support for parents  
and carers**



### 7.3. Reaching parents through radio

Radio is a cost-effective way of reaching for delivering content at scale, especially in communities with low connectivity, digital literacy and electricity, as well as hard-to-reach parents and students (↑Damani & Mitchell, 2020). Therefore, it is recommended that brief instructional radio scripts be created, informing parents on best practice to support their children at home. Ideally, information should be brief and aired during prime time on a daily basis during a coordinated, intense campaign.

Information should also be practical and relatable to the circumstances of a variety of parents. These scripts could also be adapted to be reused as TV content.

## 7.4. Recommended next steps

For details on implementation, please consult the [↑concept note for implementation](#) and the associated planning tools. The table below is also available in [↑spreadsheet format](#), including details on resourcing and timing.

The following steps are recommended to ensure that parents and caregivers are engaged and supported throughout the ARP.

Ministry of Education / EDMU		
5.1.1	Conduct parental needs assessment	Work in collaboration with schools to collect information on the needs of parents and caregivers. Design a questionnaire that schools may use to collect this information.
5.1.2	Review existing content created for parents	Review some of the content and materials made available to parents since the start of the pandemic and get feedback on whether it was useful.
5.1.3	Update existing content for parents and develop new content as needed	<p>Based on the findings in the first two stages, proceed to produce or repurpose content geared towards helping parents engage more actively in their children's education.</p> <p>Producing short and informative radio content suggested. Parents must be involved in the design of these tools.</p> <p>Content should include pair mentoring with siblings / friends and the importance of talking and play activities.</p>
5.1.4	Roll out content	Make all content produced available to parents.
5.1.5	Radio campaign	Create brief instructional radio scripts informing parents on best practice to support their child / children at home. Ideally, information should be brief and aired during prime time on a daily basis during a coordinated, intense campaign. Information should also be practical and relatable to the circumstances of a variety of parents.
5.1.6	Redefine counsellor	Revisit guideline for the role of counsellors during the

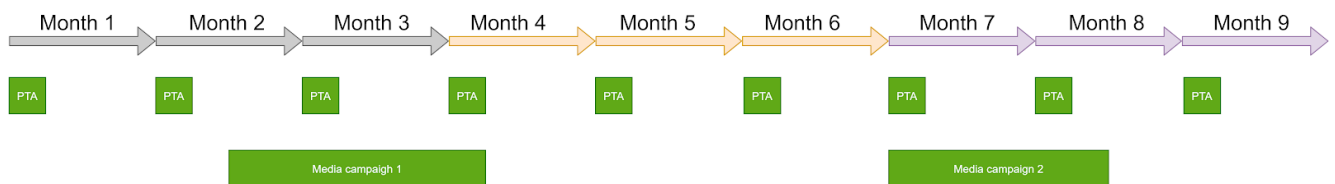
	roles	pandemic.
5.1.7	Develop plan for increasing the number of counsellors	Consider finance and processes for hiring new counsellors.
<b>School administrators and principals</b>		
5.2.1	Support parental needs assessment	Ensure the dissemination of the questionnaire produced by the MoE to assess the needs of parents and caregivers.
5.2.2	Make information available to the designated authorities	Present this information to the designated authorities in the prescribed format.
5.2.3	Inform parents about the availability of new content	Once the content is ready to be disseminated, inform parents and caregivers about its availability and make it available to them.
5.2.4	Strengthen links with PTA	Coordinate with local and national PTAs to ensure that parents understand their roles and perform them effectively.
5.2.5	Developing engagement protocols for parents	Define a protocol for parental support, stating exactly what is expected of them in supporting blended learning. Develop a list of alternative ways to engage them (materials, training etc.), and a schedule for engagement. Pay attention to parents' psychosocial needs.
<b>Teachers</b>		
5.3.1	Disseminate and collect questionnaires	Send questionnaires to students' parents and ensure that they complete them to identify parents particularly in need of support.
5.3.2	Submit questionnaire responses	Submit responses to the school administrator in the required format.
5.3.3	Support dissemination of resources to parents	Support the dissemination of ARP resources to parents once available.
5.3.4	Identify, support, and refer	Identify students and families in need of intervention, engaging them directly, or referring to counsellors and / or SPED specialists where possible



## 7.5. Indicative sequencing and timeline

The timing of engagement activities should be consistent (ideally monthly, through fora such as parent-teacher associations), and media campaigns should be coordinated for maximal engagement, for example, at the beginning of school terms, when the requirement for them to support their child's learning will increase.

**Figure 5.** *Indicative timeline for key parental engagement component activities*



### 7.5.1. Pressures faced by parents

The additional pressure faced by parents during the pandemic should be recognised in materials produced for parents, and their content should give consideration to parental mental health and wellbeing. Even if the materials produced mean increasing responsibility for their children's education during home-based learning, effort must be made to ensure that parental guidance and materials are concise, actionable, and not perceived as simply another burden for them to bear.

## 8. Component 6. Community engagement

Component 6 focuses on engaging the community. [↑Berg et al. \(2006\)](#) define community engagement as

*"a two-way street where the school, families, and the community actively work together, creating networks of shared responsibility for student success".*

Members of the community and community-based organisations<sup>6</sup> should all be considered stakeholders in children's education. According to [↑American Institutes for Research \(2021\)](#), their role could include:

- Ensuring safety and providing support (e.g. neighbors along route to school);
- Offering remedial education to students (e.g. civil society groups); or
- Partnering between systems (e.g. child welfare, law enforcement, libraries, and community resource centres).

The goal is to offer protective factors that can contribute to student resilience as well as help efficiently and effectively address issues when they arise. The school equally has a role to play in actively reaching out to be a resource to the community ([↑Berg, et al., 2006](#)). When implemented effectively, community engagement reduces the weight that many principals and school administrators have traditionally carried alone ([↑Berg, et al., 2006](#)).

### 8.1. Why is this component important to the ARP?

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Within the community, evidence suggests that people and organisations have been known to assist in providing tutoring to assist students' learning, and that students are often quite responsive to these kinds of interventions. Also, parents may already have relationships with community organisations and other professionals: therefore, it is important to build on these existing partnerships. Community support of the ARP will be key to its long-term sustainability.

### 8.2. Activities

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Bonds between schools, families, and community entities need to be formed to be strengthened as the ARP and support scaling up across the four countries. In such cases, these partnerships must be strengthened and formalised to better support the ARP. In the discussion on the formation of alliances, mention must be made concerning the critical role that counsellors play. In the context of the ARP, the role of the counsellor

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<sup>6</sup> Such as sports groups, youth clubs, voluntary service organisations, faith-based organisations. Local professionals should also be considered as potential partners for engagement.

should be revisited, for example, analysing/revisiting counsellor engagement in online and or social media platforms.

### 8.3. Recommended next steps

For details on implementation, please consult the [concept note for implementation](#) and the associated planning tools. The following steps are recommended to engage the community for the ARP:

Ministry of Education / EDMU		
6.1.1	Identify organisations and individuals	Identify community based-organisations and individuals who offer catch up lessons or remedial education to children. These may include faith-based groups, youth groups etc.  The evaluation could be supported by local consultants who have access to community organisations. The evaluation could potentially be led by a community organisation.
6.1.2	Define shared goals / objectives	Explain the goals of the ARP to community figures and identify potential areas for collaboration.
6.1.3	Establish a role for appropriate individuals and organisations	Based on the findings in the first two steps, establish clearly-defined roles and goals of the community organisations within the ARP context.
School administrators and principals		
6.2.1	Involve teachers and staff	Involve the teachers and auxiliary staff in understanding the importance of school and community partnerships.
6.2.2	Set up a community engagement team	Set up a community engagement team of about 2-4 teachers responsible for identifying and approaching community group leaders and relevant organisations / individuals.
6.2.3	Approach community group leaders	Organise meetings with community leaders and relevant organisations / individuals to explain the ARP's scope and content. Emphasise the importance of the role they have to play. Discuss potential ways they can complement the programme. Formalise and record mutual commitments.
6.2.4	Engage partners	Work collaboratively with identified leaders,

		organisations, and individuals to define the scope of their role in the ARP.
6.2.5	Promote counselling and referrals as needed	Explain the counsellor's role to staff, students, and parents.
6.2.6	Evaluate training needs	Evaluate the training needs of participating groups.
6.2.7	Implement training and processes	Establish and implement a training schedule, protocols, and monitoring practices.
<b>Teachers</b>		
6.3.1	Join / support community engagement team	Join the community engagement working group or provide support by providing information contacts the school can approach.

## 9. Component 7. Partnerships

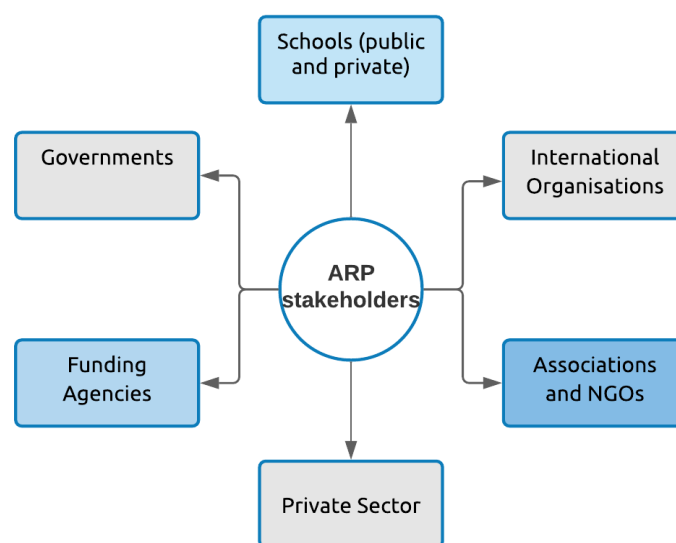
Component 7 forms an overarching activity which, through seeking to form relevant partnerships across different sectors, supports all other ARP components.

### 9.1. Why is this component important to the ARP?

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The term ‘partnerships’ cover a wide range of activities, from highly collaborative networking based approaches of organisation and collaboration to less collaborative brokering- and provision-based approaches, where one partner provides the majority of the inputs ([Baars & Menzies, 2015](#)). Establishing and maintaining strategic partnerships with key stakeholders in the education landscape will be important to the success of the ARP. The right kind of partnerships can ensure that competency gaps are reduced, enabling sharing of facilities and resources and consolidating learning ([Bajinder Pal Singh, 2019](#)). There is, therefore, a need to develop partnerships at the international, national, regional, and local levels.

**Figure 5.** *Indicative stakeholder mapping for ARP*



In this context, relevant private sector entities include mobile network providers, school supplier retailers, private schools etc. Funding agencies could be IGOs such as the United Nations or the OECS, overseas development organisations such as USAID or FCDO, or INGOs such as the Global Partnership for Education.

The following features of a partnership are critical to its success ([Baars & Menzies, 2015](#)):

- **Importance of a shared goal / strategic rationale for the partnership**, which provides a shared sense of purpose and responsibility.
- **Importance of the credibility and experience of the individuals involved in providing any support.** It is important to do background checks and track record checks of potential partners.
- **Respecting what already works well in a school and the resources that already exist there;** integrating partnerships with this existing practice and expertise.
- **Clear lines of communication** allow dialogue and feedback between partners.
- **Exposure to different and contrasting practice.**
- High levels of **trust and accountability.**

## 9.2. Activities

Prior to the ARP implementation and during month 1, the major activity to be carried out in this stage will be to conduct a stakeholder mapping, and analysis to create — or update an existing — database with all the major actors relevant to the planning, monitoring and delivery of the ARP. The ARP framework also presents an opportunity to carry out partnership diagnostics to evaluate some of the existing partnerships. The results of these diagnostics will determine whether or not some of the partnerships should be maintained, upgraded, or discarded. At the school level, principals are the key figures overseeing implementation and monitoring activities and motivating teachers.

## 9.3. Recommended next steps

For details on implementation, please consult the [↑concept note for implementation](#) and the associated planning tools. The table below is also available in [↑spreadsheet format](#), including details on resourcing and timing.

The following steps are recommended for sustainable cross-sector ARP partnerships.

Ministry of Education / EDMU		
7.1.1	Desk-based research	Undertake desk-based review of all the current actors in the field and create or update a database with relevant information about their operations.  The evaluation could be supported by local consultants to assess partnerships.
7.1.2	Partnership modelling	Based on the information gathered, review partnership models as they are best suited for (primary and secondary) learners. Some partnership models to be

		explored include brokering, and providing support, and establishing networks.
7.1.3	Partnership evaluation	Carry out an audit of all existing partnerships to determine the state of those existing partnerships.
7.1.4	Establish new partnerships	Establish new partnerships with relevant actors and incorporate them into monitoring frameworks as necessary. Partnerships need to be built with organisations that can support students with SPED needs.
7.1.6	Record keeping	Maintain and update records of partnerships, as well as renewed searches to identify new potential partners

### School administrators and principals

7.2.1	Inform teachers about partnerships	Inform teachers, parents and auxiliary staff of the importance of creating partnerships for the ARP.
7.2.2	Review existing partnerships	Carry out audits on all existing partnerships to determine the state and viability of existing partnerships. Potential indicators include power balance, shared values, common goals and the overall impact.
7.2.3	Set up partnerships working group	Set up a partnership task force of teachers who will identify local organisations or institutions who could be potential partners (this could also include resourceful parents).
7.2.4	Identify potential partners	Identify potential partners and collaborators (in this case, nearby schools, community and faith-based organisations, service providers) who may help the ARP. Feed this information back to relevant stakeholders, including the district education management officer, if necessary.
7.2.5	Check for aligned goals and values	Approach potential partners to identify common goals, shared interests, and values.
7.2.6	Establish new partnerships	Establish new partnerships with relevant actors and incorporate them into monitoring frameworks as necessary.
7.2.7	Determining the nature of partnerships	Once partners are selected and the nature of partnerships are established, set up a training schedule for those who will provide mentorship and or training. Identify what will be provided and when, considering storage and maintenance where relevant.

Teachers		
7.3.1	Participate in ARP staff meetings	Participating in ARP-related staff meetings will enable teachers to understand the nature and importance of partnerships for ARP success and longevity.
7.3.2	Join or support ARP partnerships taskforce	Teachers can either join their school's (or district's) partnership task force or provide support in identifying potential partners for community organisations.



## 10. Monitoring and accountability

Throughout the ARP planning and implementation, it is important to put in place a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure accountability, ownership, and transparency. To that effect, it is crucial to review and establish monitoring structures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to ensure that every stakeholder knows exactly what is expected of them. Also, communication channels should be clear and accessible to enable regular dialogue and feedback among stakeholders. These are cross-cutting activities that underpin the entirety of the ARP from start to finish.

‘Monitoring’ is a process occurring at different levels—classroom, school, national—every single day. From summative national assessments to teachers’ informal diagnostic assessments to gauge student learning, data is constantly being generated. A consistent structure to ensure that the right data is harvested and used for effective decision making is clearly needed. Reporting tools and instruments should be reviewed and prepared prior to the start of ARP implementation. Every decision made in the ARP framework context should be based on verifiable evidence and the best available data.

Effective monitoring means that those responsible for ensuring results can be held accountable where necessary. Broadly speaking, accountability can be broken down into actors at different levels:

- **Household.** Parents and primary caregivers (though this is more through support and encouragement than enforcement).
- **Classroom.** Teachers, tutors, instructors, and SPED specialists.
- **School.** Principals, administrators, and school management staff.
- **Sub-national.** District/regional education management staff.
- **National.** MoE staff, in cooperation with counterparts in the OECS.

Depending on the financial resources available to support the implementation of the ARP, funding decisions may also be according to a results-based framework like that outlined below.

## 10.1. Results-based monitoring and evaluation framework for the ARP

For further details on the results-based monitoring and evaluation framework, please consult the [↑concept note for implementation](#) and the associated planning tools. The table below is also available in [↑spreadsheet format](#).

Component	Responsible	Activities	Outputs	Performance indicators	Means of verification	Outcome	Assumptions
Component 1. Supporting teachers and instructors	Ministry of Education / EDMU  School administrators and principals  Teachers	1.1.1. Planning psychosocial and social support for teaching staff and instructors 1.1.2. Establish support network for teachers 1.1.3. TPD - Session plans 1.1.4. Implementing psychosocial / social support for teaching staff and instructors 1.2.1. TPD - Facilitator selection 1.2.2. TPD - Planning 1.2.3. TPD - Material production and distribution 1.2.4. TPD - Evaluation 1.3.1. TPD - Co-facilitation and delivery	Delivery TPD sessions for academic recovery with - high-quality materials, - weekly participation from teachers.  Establishment of a support network for teachers.	Number of sessions organised  Number of participants in TPD sessions	Attendance records of participants in the TPD sessions; M&E forms  Facilitator's report on sessions	Teachers and instructors receive adequate training and support needed to deliver and monitor the ARP	Teachers are available to attend and participate in PD sessions  Teachers remain motivated throughout  Resources required to deliver the sessions are available
Component 2. Diagnostic tools and assessment	Ministry of Education / EDMU  Teachers	2.1.1.. Monitoring of diagnostic test data 2.2.1. Planning and administering diagnostic tests 2.2.2. Incorporate test results into lesson plans and pre- and reteaching activities 2.2.3. Building diagnostic tests for SPED 2.2.4. Delivery of TPD on diagnostic tests	Monitoring of diagnostic test results at schools, district and national levels  Diagnostic tests available to all teachers	Diagnostic tests available (for learning loss, for SPED)  Number of assessments administered to students	List of students who need help document / database  Individual support measures reported by teachers	Diagnostic tools are used effectively by teachers to assess children and identify students who need help	Students are available to take diagnostic tests  Teachers have the time to administer (and grade) the diagnostic tests

			TPD sessions manuals for facilitators and teachers	Test administration records and results  Decisions made on basis of test outcomes	Lesson plans informed by diagnostic data		
Component 3. Special education and disability (SPED)	Ministry of Education / EDMU  Ministry of Health  School administrators and principals  SPED / classroom teachers	3.1.1. Evaluate the current digital divide with regard to SPED 3.1.2. Ensure robust M&E systems and identification processes 3.1.3. Clearly define the roles of stakeholders 3.1.4. Close technology and resource gaps 3.1.5. Provide resources to teachers and instructors 3.1.6. Build partnerships with parents / caregivers 3.1.7. Work towards increased staffing 3.1.8. Content sourcing for SPED 3.1.9. Recruit and train more SPED teachers and instructors 3.2.1. Collaborate with MoE on diagnosis 3.2.2. Collaborate with MoE on strategy 3.2.3. Contribute to designing of TPD 3.2.4. Awareness campaign rollout 3.3.1. Engage with SPED identification processes 3.3.2. Partnerships with SPED specialists and organisations 3.3.3. Keep records of SPED students	TPD sessions and resources for SPED (and non-SPED) teachers  Content repository for SPED students  SPED students provided with materials / devices  Awareness campaign rolled out  Referral system strengthened	Number of newly recruited SPED staff  Number of books / tablets and resources delivered SPED students  Availability of SPED content repository  Attendance records for SPED TPD sessions	Distribution records of resources and devices to SPED children  Facilitator report on SPED TPD Sessions  Availability of SPED content repository  Records of SPED student referrals and action plans	Children with special education needs have access to resources for ARP, and teachers are able to understand and respond to the needs of SPED students	Ministries have allocated funding to provide resources to SPED children  There are trained individuals for SPED available for employment  There is enough open source content for SPED children online

		3.4.1. SPED student evaluation / planning 3.4.2. Engaging parents of SPED students 3.4.3. Supporting SPED students 3.4.4. Participate in TPD sessions 3.4.5. Keep records, use support plans and referrals 3.4.6. Source for content online 3.4.7. Administer diagnostic tests and deliver feedback					
Component 4. Resource library: Open Educational Resources	Ministry of Education / EDMU  School administrators and principals  Teachers	4.1.1. Content inventory 4.1.2. Content sourcing 4.1.3. Review content 4.1.4. Content curation and alignment 4.1.5. Material development 4.2.1. Collate required inventory of resources 4.2.2. Resource allocation and pooling 4.2.3. Test OERs and ensure teacher competency 4.3.1. Resource inventory and allocation 4.3.2. Resource storage and access management 4.3.3. Ensure safeguarding of students and student information	Mechanisms for sharing content among territories and among schools.  An online content repository aligned with relevant national curricula is established (or an existing repository is used by all partners).	Number of teachers engaging with open resource platforms  Number of teachers engaging with aligned curriculum	OECS resource library available online	The OECS has a fully developed resource library.  Teachers are accessing and adapting materials for use in school work, between schools where relevant.	Teachers are willing to engage with the platform  Schools are confidently engaging with aligned curriculum  Aligned curriculum is responsive to current academic / training needs

Component 5. Engaging and supporting parents	Ministry of Education / EDMU	5.1.1. Conduct parental needs assessment 5.1.2. Review existing content created for parents 5.1.3. Update exiting content for parents and develop new content as needed 5.1.4. Roll out content 5.1.5. Radio campaign 5.1.6. Redefine counsellor roles 5.1.7. Develop plan for increasing the number of counsellors	Parents' resource toolkit (videos, podcasts, and print resources)	Number of messages received by teachers from parents	Availability of parents ARP resource	Parents are actively engaged in their children's education	Parents are confident in how to effectively support their children at home
	School administrators and principals  Teachers	5.2.1. Support parental needs assessment 5.2.2. Make information available to the designated authorities 5.2.3. Inform parents about the availability of new content 5.2.4. Strengthen links with PTA 5.2.5. Developing engagement protocols for parents 5.3.1. Disseminate and collect questionnaires 5.3.2. Submit questionnaire responses 5.3.3. Support dissemination of resources to parents 5.3.4. Identify, support, and refer	Radio campaign at national level  Parental engagement protocols and content for parents	Number of 'new' parents attending PTA meetings	PTA meeting report(s) detailing attendance		Parents are willing to collaborate with teachers  Parents support interventions from community groups

Component 6. Community engagement	Ministry of Education / EDMU  School administrator s and principals  Teachers	6.1.1. Identify organisations and individuals 6.1.2. Define shared goals / objectives 6.1.3. Establish a role for appropriate individuals and organisations 6.2.1. Involve teachers and staff 6.2.2. Set up a community engagement team 6.2.3. Approach community group leaders 6.2.4. Engage partners 6.2.5. Promote counselling and referrals as needed 6.2.6. Evaluate training needs 6.2.7. Implement training and processes 6.3.1. Join / support community engagement team	List of identified organisations and individuals  Document reporting shared goals / objectives  Community engagement team established  Document describing training needs and approach to training	Number of organisations identified  Community engagement is establishing relationships with community organisations	List of identified organisations and individuals  Document reporting shared goals / objectives  Document describing training needs and approach to training	Greater collaboration with the community reduces pressure on teachers and provides better opportunities for weaker students to learn	Community organisations are willing to contribute
Component 7. Partnerships	Ministry of Education / EDMU / EDMU  School Administrator s and Principals  School administrator s and	7.1.1. Desk-based research 7.1.2. Partnership modelling 7.1.3. Partnership evaluation 7.1.4. Establish new partnerships 7.1.6. Record keeping 7.2.1. Inform teachers about partnerships 7.2.2. Review existing partnerships 7.2.3. Set up partnerships working group 7.2.4. Identify potential partners 7.2.5. Check for aligned goals and values 7.2.6. Establish new partnerships 7.2.7. Determining the nature of partnerships	Partnerships mapping document  List of existing partners and new potential partners (including industry and commerce).	Number of meetings organised with partners  New partnership deals established.	Submitted and approved partnerships mapping report  Number of new partnership contracts or renewals	Sustainable strategic cross-sectoral partnerships have been established to support the planning, monitoring and delivery of the ARP	Stakeholders are willing to work together  Stakeholders share common values and goals

	principals Teachers	7.3.1. Participate in ARP staff meetings 7.3.2. Join or support ARP partnerships taskforce					
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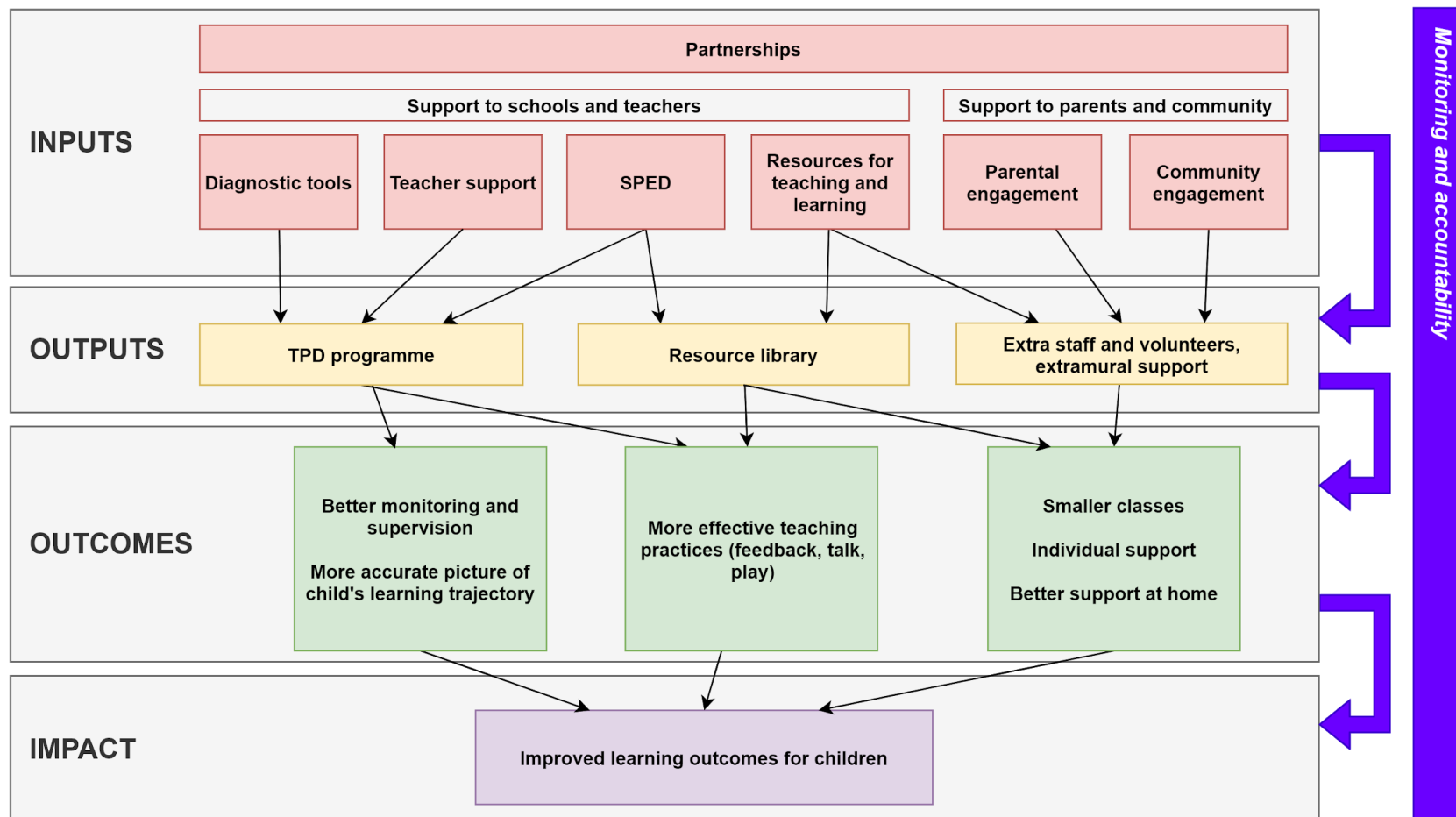
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## 12. Appendix 1. Theory of Change



## 13. Appendix 2. Education Endowment Foundation toolkits

### 13.1. Early years toolkit

An accessible summary of educational research for early years teaching (0-5 years; [Education Endowment Foundation, 2018](#)).

Teaching approach	Summary of impact, cost and evidence	Cost	Security of evidence	Learning gains
<b>Communication and language approaches</b>	High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.	1	4	6
<b>Early numeracy approaches</b>	High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.	1	4	6
<b>Earlier starting age</b>	High impact for very high cost, based on moderate evidence.	5	3	6
<b>Play-based learning</b>	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on very limited evidence.	1	1	5
<b>Self-regulation strategies</b>	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on limited evidence.	1	2	5
<b>Early literacy approaches</b>	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on moderate evidence.	1	3	4
<b>Digital technology</b>	Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on limited evidence.	3	2	4
<b>Parental engagement</b>	Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on moderate evidence.	3	3	4
<b>Physical development approaches</b>	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on limited evidence.	1	2	3
<b>Social and emotional learning strategies</b>	Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on very limited evidence.	3	1	3
<b>Extra hours</b>	Moderate impact for very high cost, based on limited evidence.	5	2	3
<b>Built environment</b>	Very low or no impact for low cost, based on very limited evidence.	2	1	0



## 13.2. Teaching and learning toolkit

An accessible summary of the international evidence on teaching 5- to 16-year-olds ([Education Endowment Foundation, 2018](#)).

Teaching approach	Summary of impact, cost and evidence	Cost	Security of evidence	Learning gains
Feedback	High impact for very low cost, based on moderate evidence.	1	3	8
Metacognition and self-regulation	High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.	1	4	7
Reading comprehension strategies	High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.	1	4	6
Homework (Secondary)	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on limited evidence.	1	2	5
Mastery learning	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on moderate evidence.	1	3	5
Collaborative learning	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.	1	4	5
Oral language interventions	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.	1	4	5
Peer tutoring	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.	1	4	5
One to one tuition	Moderate impact for high cost, based on extensive evidence.	4	4	5
Early years interventions	Moderate impact for very high cost, based on extensive evidence.	5	4	5
Phonics	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on very extensive evidence.	1	5	4
Digital technology	Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence.	3	4	4
Outdoor adventure learning	Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on moderate evidence.	3	3	4
Small group tuition	Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on limited evidence.	3	2	4
Social and emotional learning	Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence.	3	4	4
Individualised instruction	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on moderate evidence.	1	3	3
Within-class attainment grouping	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on limited evidence.	1	2	3



Behaviour interventions	Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence.	3	4	3
Parental engagement	Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on moderate evidence.	3	3	3
Reducing class size	Moderate impact for high cost, based on moderate evidence.	4	3	3
Homework (Primary)	Low impact for very low cost, based on limited evidence.	1	2	2
Learning styles	Low impact for very low cost, based on limited evidence.	1	2	2
Arts participation	Low impact for low cost, based on moderate evidence.	2	3	2
Extending school time	Low impact for moderate cost, based on moderate evidence.	3	3	2
Sports participation	Low impact for moderate cost, based on limited evidence.	3	2	2
Summer schools	Low impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence.	3	4	2
Performance pay	Low impact for low cost, based on limited evidence.	2	2	1
Teaching assistants	Low impact for high cost, based on limited evidence.	4	2	1
Block scheduling	Very low or no impact for very low cost, based on limited evidence.	1	2	0
School uniform	Very low or no impact for very low cost, based on very limited evidence.	1	1	0
Built environment	Very low or no impact for low cost, based on very limited evidence.	2	1	0
Aspiration interventions	Very low or no impact for moderate cost, based on very limited evidence.	3	1	0
Mentoring	Very low or no impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence.	3	4	0
Setting or streaming	Negative impact for very low cost, based on limited evidence.	1	2	-1
Repeating a year	Negative impact for very high cost, based on moderate evidence.	5	3	-4

## 14. Appendix 3: SPED Internal referral form

This referral form<sup>7</sup> should be used to record any points of concern noted by the teacher, and will begin the referrals process (see Appendix 4).

<b>Student name &amp; ID:</b>	
<b>Grade:</b>	
<b>Teacher:</b>	
<b>Date of referral:</b>	

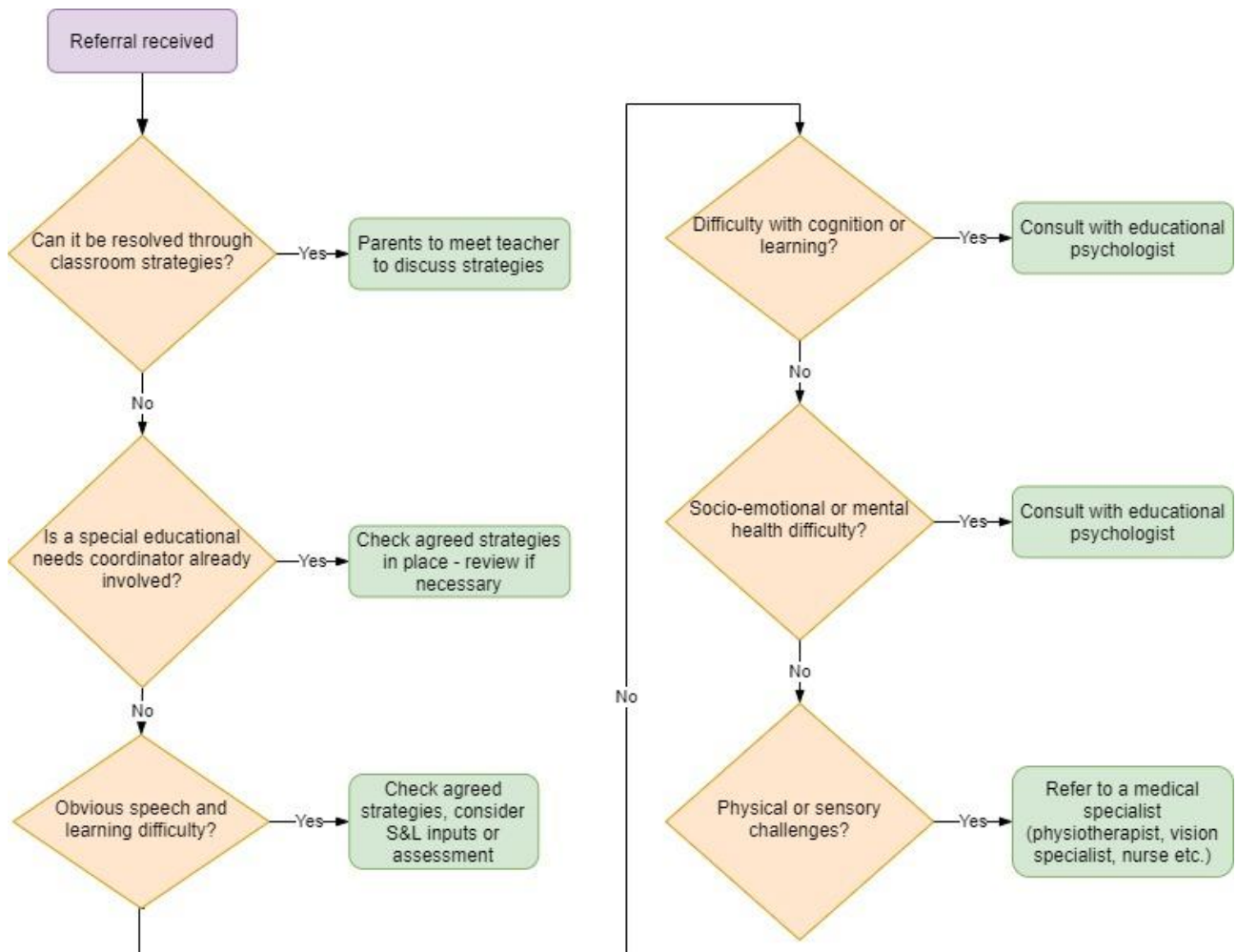
Concerns — Tix applicable box(es). Describe challenges and strategies used so far	
	Cognition and Learning — General Learning Difficulties
	Cognition and Learning — Specific Learning Difficulties (including dyslexia)
	Communication and Interaction – Including social communication/social skills
	Speech and Language Difficulties
	Socioemotional and Mental Health
	Physical – Gross and fine motor skills; visual; hearing

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from materials provided by [New City College](#), Tower Hamlets, London

## 15. Appendix 4. SPED referral flowchart

Below is an exemplar SPED referral flowchart, adapted from a typical referral flowchart used in UK schools. Its key assumptions are:

- Access to a SPED specialist
- Access to relevant medical/psychological specialists where appropriate



## 16. Appendix 5. SPED support plan template

This individual support plan<sup>8</sup> outlines the agreed support to be implemented in accordance with the support assessment and any medical professional notes. To ensure effective implementation, this plan must be shared with all staff involved in any part of its delivery.

<b>Student name &amp; ID:</b>	
<b>Teacher:</b>	
<b>SPED area of need/condition:</b>	
<b>Specialist support agreed:</b>	
<b>Background information:</b>	

Strengths	Useful strategies

Outcomes/ targets	Progress towards outcomes/targets		
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
#1			
#2			
#3			

<sup>8</sup> Adapted from materials provided by [New City College](#), Tower Hamlets, London

## 17. Appendix 6. Teacher Support: Importance of Talk and Play

### 17.1. The importance of talk

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Oral language interventions can have a significant impact on student learning outcomes. Talk is part of the human experience in which people make sense of the world and communicate. ↑[Alexander \(2008\)](#) identifies talk as an important factor in facilitating children's learning and communication. Thus, facilitating talk in the classroom is an important activity when engaging students in ways that allow them to explore ideas, organise their thoughts, and appreciate the contributions of others. In her work on reading comprehension, ↑[Maine \(2013\)](#) explores the role of dialogic talk in reading comprehension and notes that

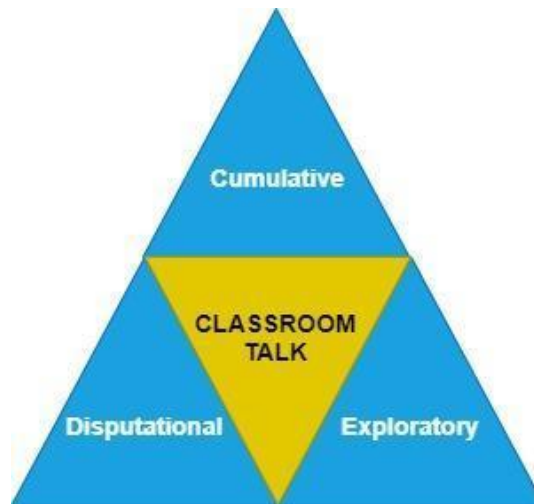
*“Rather than with a set of prescribed skills, comprehension was enabled through creative thinking and dialogue, with children building on the ideas of each other in a dialogic space that existed between themselves and the text.”* (↑[Maine, 2013, p.155](#))

Thus talk, specifically dialogic talk, in which children not only respond to the text but also talk to each other, facilitates negotiation, interpretation, and prioritising discussion amongst others. In this way, learning is enabled as children engage with texts and each other in ways that enhance their comprehension.

During discussions with teachers and ministry of education officials, the idea of increasing talk in the classroom was explored, and there was a desire to move in the directions where talk was more utilised as a classroom practice. Use of talk is especially pertinent during academic recovery as teaching in the pandemic has proven challenging. Using talk, teachers evaluate students' learning and understanding of content as well as create avenues for students to engage with content in meaningful ways.

↑[Mercer \(1995\)](#) identifies three interconnected types of talk: disputational, cumulative and exploratory (see Figure 6 below).

**Figure 6.** *Types of talk in the classroom*



According to Mercer, **disputational talk** involves disputes, short exchanges, and disagreements and individualised decision making. **Cumulative talk** occurs when students build on each other's responses, in a largely uncritical way. In these situations, they are repetitions and students elaborate on the responses of the others so that they construct knowledge together. With **exploratory talk**, students engage critically with each other in ways that build on, but also challenge, the perspectives of others.

Whether disputational, cumulative, or exploratory, all talk in the classroom contributes to thinking and learning together. This is particularly crucial in a crisis period where teaching is adapted. Discussion with teachers and ministry of education officials revealed that providing education during the COVID-19 pandemic proved very challenging and impacted some groups of students more than others. A lack of access to devices and issues with internet connectivity, leading to the inadvertent exclusion of some students and a notable loss of learning for many already struggling students.

Given this situation, using talk as an assessment and teaching tool is effective as it allows teachers to gauge learning and next steps for intervention. Talk can be used in many other ways, such as initiating discussion, generating ideas, developing brainstorming, developing critical thinking, developing questioning skills, developing vocabulary, and developing students' ability to explain. These activities would enable teachers to engage a range of learners and assess them accordingly. Below are some links that highlight practical ways to utilise talk in the classroom.

- [What are 'Types of talk'?](#)
- [Effective talk in the primary classroom](#)
- [Talking in Class](#)
- [How to use classroom conversation to improve learning](#)
- [Teacher Talk, Pedagogical Talk and Classroom Activities: Another Look](#)

## 17.2. The importance of play

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Play forms an integral part of childhood and is recognised as an important part of early-years learning. [↑Eberle \(2014\)](#) posits that, whether solitary or in a group, freeform or codified, active or passive, play can be defined by six basic but key elements (anticipation, surprise, pleasure, understanding, strength, and poise), unified under the chief aim of fun for its own sake. Because its benefits are so extensive, play has been asserted as an evolutionary and developmentally important activity ([↑Bateson & Martin, 2000](#); [↑Eberle, 2011](#); [↑Eberle, 2014](#)). Play serves a number of different purposes, such as:

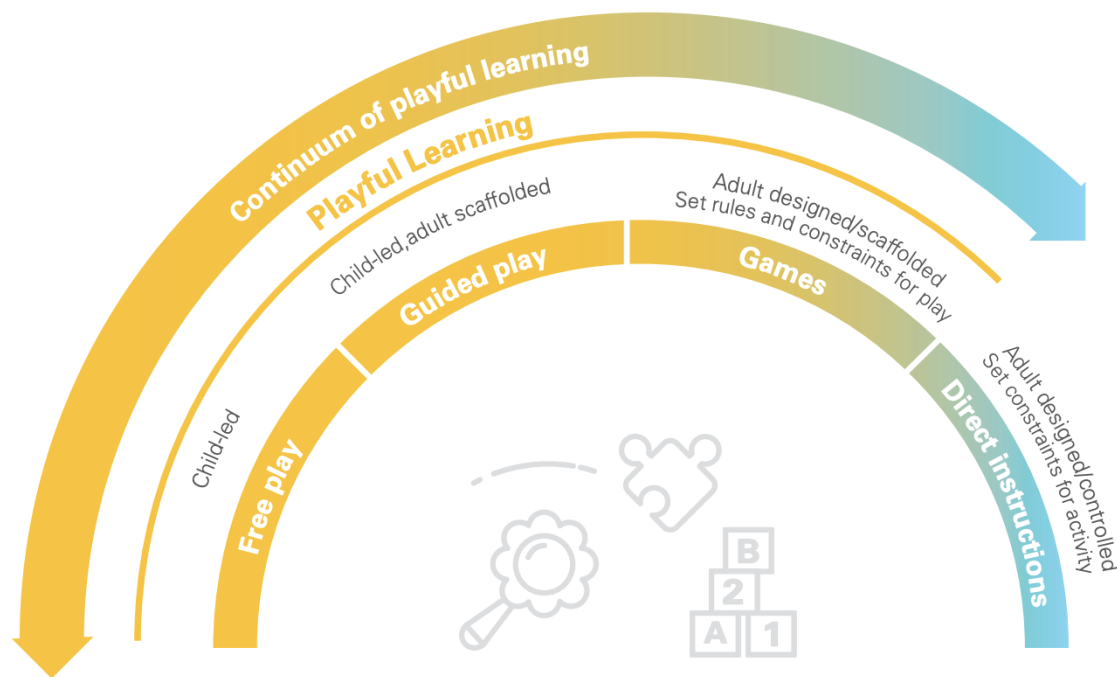
- Acquiring skills and experience needed in adulthood ([↑Bateson, 1987](#)).
- In the classroom, fostering improvements in such subjects as mathematics, language, early literacy, and socio-emotional skills: it does so for children from both low- and higher-income environments ([↑Duncan et al., 2007](#)).
- Learning to cooperate with others and engaging in socially appropriate behaviour ([↑Bodrova et al., 2013](#)).

Play should therefore be regarded as an indispensable classroom activity in early years that enables children to develop a wide variety of social and academic skills ([↑Coppie & Bredekamp, 2010](#); [↑Fisher, et al., 2011](#)) and integrated into the ELP curriculum. Teachers, therefore, have a critical role in facilitating play, by recognising, initiating, guiding, and scaffolding playful experiences in support of children's agency ([↑The LEGO Foundation, 2018](#)).

Despite the many benefits of play, there has been a steady decrease in the amount of time kindergarten classes devoted to play ([↑Brownson et al., 2010](#); [↑Frost et al., 2012](#); [↑Meisels et al., 2000](#)). A review of the ELP programme also indicated that there were not enough play activities in the curriculum and play pedagogies in the teacher professional development sessions.

The LEGO foundation identifies various levels of play throughout the child's learning process both in and outside of a school setting (see Figure 7, [↑The LEGO Foundation, 2018](#)).

**Figure 7.** *Continuum of playful learning.*



The figure above illustrates different levels of play in a child's learning process and highlights the role adults and teachers have to play in facilitating these experiences. It equally differentiates the various levels of play, from free play (where children can explore and discover) to a more guided and structured play with adult participation and supervision. Across this continuum, it is important to ensure that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and competencies required to support learning through play ([↑The LEGO Foundation, 2018](#)). School administrators and learning space designers should also bear this in mind when designing a learning environment.

Consequently, it is recommended that member states undertake TPD sessions aimed at addressing play pedagogies within a blended learning environment and include play activities in the ELP curriculum. These activities should involve some degree of agency, enabling children to take on an active role in, and ownership of, their experiences, as well as recognising and trusting them to be capable, autonomous, and agents of their own playful learning journeys ([↑The LEGO Foundation, 2018](#)).

For practical ideas on play, see:

- [Play-Based Learning: What It Is and Why It Should Be a Part of Every Classroom](#)
- [Play in the classroom](#)
- [Why play is essential for the classroom](#)
- [Free kindergarten resources](#)
- [40+ Free Distance-Learning Online Games and Activities for Kindergarten](#)
- [Twinkl](#)