





Preliminary findings 2019 UCam-NU-NIS research project

Professor Colleen McLaughlin on behalf of the research team

Research team

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Data for 2019 element of this three year study

Previous research

- > 2016-7 6 pilot schools only + survey
- > 2017-18 6 pilot + 6 mainstream ones in 2018

2018- 19 element

- ➤ 3 research case studies of different regions exploring the effects of local demographics in the implementation of the renewed content of education
- ➤ 9 schools of different types multigraded, rural and urban northern, southern and Nur-Sultan
- > Interviews, focus groups

Headline news

- History and relationships between oblasts
- Importance of school director training and support
- Importance of context
- Equity conditions
- Teacher quality
- Student and teacher appreciation of new pedagogical + assessment priorities
- Vulnerable parts of the system not mainstream
- Ongoing importance of support, leadership, NIS experience and support practices, materials + leadership

Translation and continuity of educational innovations in the secondary education system of Kazakhstan.

Case study of Location D: Teachers' perspectives

REGION-D Case study research team:

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Outline of the Location-D Case Study

- The research context: Location D
- Research sample
- Results: teachers' perspectives on the renewed curriculum and assessment
- Preliminary conclusion

Location D: the context

- A large urban city; that is experiencing rapid growth
- Deficit of schools in the city. Conditions of overcrowding; schools tend to suffer from a shortage of student places and operate in multiple shifts.
- Lack of teachers [e.g. teacher's status; teacher turnover; issues with available accommodation]
- There is a concern with a teachers' quality; the level of professional competencies of teachers who moved from rural areas;
- Economic differences in supplies and salaries (e.g. gymnasium, lyceums, schools for gifted children)
- New ways of collaboration at the city level: clusters of schools

Research Sample

- Representatives from Regional Educational Authority 8 people
- Three urban mainstream schools of different size
- School directors (head teachers) 2 people
- Deputy head teachers 11 people
- Teachers: G1-3 (16); G5-8 (36)
- Students G8: 18 girls and 8 boys
- Parents: 31 mothers and 2 grandmothers

Location D: teachers' sample

	District sample	School sample	Focus Group Activity with Teachers G-1-3	Focus Group Interview with Teachers G 5-8	Focus Group Interview with Subject Teachers
Region D	District-1	Urban School D-uR	1 FG	1 FG	1 FG
	District-2	Urban School D-uKR	1 FG	1 FG	1 FG
	District-3	Urban School D-uK	1 FG	1 FG	1 FG
TOTAL	3 districts	3 schools	16 teachers	16 teachers	16 teachers

- Invitation to participate in the focus group was done through the school administration
- In addition, 4 observations of Biology lessons were conducted (three lessons were in English)

Results 1: How the aims of the initiative were understood and being met

- An initial confusion in implementing the renewed curriculum, particularly in terms of assessment
- "Adaptation process" during which some failures occurred in terms of summative assessment and communication with parents
- It was more challenging to carry out reform implementation in middle school than in primary school

"It was difficult for the 5th grade in the first term, because it took time unless we explained everything. From the primary school they were used to following the teacher, so in the 5th grade it went not excellent, but good. As for the 7th grade it was much difficult to learn without putting marks, because they were already used to it. If you loose the tension a little at the lesson, then you see, they relax and so on". (Focus group discussion with six teachers of G5-8, School D-uK)

Results 2a: Views of the content of the new curriculum

- Positive view on cross-disciplinarity
 - Helps to shape students' understanding of subjects like Natural study, History, Language and Math by developing different perspectives;
 - Helps children better process information by applying the knowledge they gained in one subject to other subjects when appropriate
 - Cross-disciplinarity topics facilitate spiral learning and cater to a variety of tasks

"Therefore, cross-cutting themes help them a lot; in each class, according to the method of spiralness, these themes are repeated, but, nevertheless, they supplement this knowledge and grammar from year to year as if added to lexical themes." (Focus group discussion with eight teachers of G5-8, School D-uKR)

- Level of difficulty
 - assessment standards were frequently too difficult for primary grades students

Results 2b: Views of the content of the new curriculum

- Applicability of knowledge
 - Broad skills development in terms of language and IT skills
 - The opportunity to apply knowledge children gain in school to reallife situation
- Curriculum coherence between level of education
 - The spiral model of learning based on Bloom taxonomy was effective in making students better remember the material through repetition and gradual move from simple to more complex tasks
- Subject change
 - Several tangible changes in curriculum in terms of hours reallocation (e.g. hours of grammar teaching were reduced while a new Nature Study discipline was added; some teachers regretted the hours' reduction in subjects like Arts and Music)

Results 3: Changes in teaching practices

- More flexibility and variety of teaching methods
- More attention to student's wellbeing
- Task progression from simple to complex and independent learning (where students are encouraged to seek information on their own without it being spoon-fed to them by teachers)
- Group work was seen as the critical factor in student motivation

However:

- It is difficulty for teachers to assess individual students within the group
- There is a large amount of preparation required for group activities

Results 4: New models of assessment

 An initial confusion in terms of [summative and formative] assessment; teachers were feeling frightened and had to rely on each other's help in figuring it out

"If you asked us this question last year, we probably would have answered it a little differently. Since we are already teaching the second year using this assessment, the students, and **we have become accustomed to it**: that is, we write summative assessments." (Focus group discussion with five teachers of G5-8, School D-uR).

- Difficulty in dealing with absent students in terms of summative tasks
- The introduction of self-assessment is seen as beneficial in terms of raising students' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses
- The introduction of formative assessment was seen by participants as an opportunity for skills development
- Initially parents did not agree with the change in the assessment.
 Coaching sessions to explain formative and summative assessment to parents.

Results 5: Professional support and resources

- While some teachers had no difficulty attending CPD courses and found them useful, others noted they did not understand everything right away
- A lack of practical training; desire for shorter, more frequent training opportunities to catch up with curriculum updates as well as English language training
- Inter-grade collaboration among the teachers within the same school;
 and inter-school collaboration in clusters of schools
- While some teachers were happy with the textbooks, other noted that textbooks either contained some mistakes or did not match the school programme
- All groups of teachers noted an increase in teachers' workload due to the need to prepare the additional task and search for extra resources, although primary school teachers seemed to be more content with the resources offered by their schools

Results 6: Introduction of the trilingual policy

- Primary school teachers noted the drawbacks of trilingual policy in terms of its impact on subject knowledge of their students while middle school teachers pointed out that their students can use their knowledge of languages to learn other subjects.
- All subject teachers of middle school expressed positive views about the introduction of the trilingual policy.

However:

- The English language skills of teachers and students were not adequate to conduct lessons properly, nor to explain subject specific content
- The length, timing, and scope of language training for teachers were not adequate.

Preliminary conclusion

- The results show that the intention behind the renewed curriculum and new assessment system was well perceived by teachers.
- There are some obstacles for the implementation such as lack of understanding of the curriculum and assessment; resistance from parents; insufficient and lack of proper professional training; limited time for teachers to collaborate and share experience.

"this is a **radical change** to create a modern, intelligent, competent person, who is able to answer why to go to school, what to study, and what purpose of his/her studying." (Focus group discussion with six teachers of G5-8, School D-uK)

REGION C Case study

Case study C research team:

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Outline of the Region C case study

- I. Region C overview
- How are the aims of the initiative were understood and being met
- Views of the content of the new curriculum
- 4. Changes in teaching practices
- New model of assessment
- 6. Professional support
- 7. School resources
- 8. Introduction of the trilingual policy
- 9. Lessons learnt

REA, 2 rural schools, I urban school, field trip reflections

I. Region C - overview

- Mainly agricultural; enjoying 'cleaner air'
- 'Dying out' villages; mainly pensioners are left in the villages
- Some buildings are dilapidated
- Roads are poor, especially secondary roads and roads in the villages
- 4-fold decrease in student numbers as a result of rural-urban migration and emigration
- Pronounced rural/urban differences in resources and infrastructure

2. How the aims of the initiative were understood and being met

- The implementation is viewed very differently between schools and locales (urban vs rural)
 - Globalisation as a drive behind the reform initiative; adopting 'best practices'; preparation for life-long learning; outcome-based learning
 - Comparison with NIS students' socio-economic background, access to resources, etc.
 - The renewed curriculum is in many ways widening the gap between urban and rural schools due to the difference in access to specific resources.
- Top down approach to reform with little consideration about feasibility of implementation
- Different audiences have different interpretations
- Initial negative reaction due to media representation of the reform
- Teachers, students parents 'were in panic somewhat'; now 'we got used to it'.

3. Views of the content of the new curriculum

- While teachers were ready to take it on after attending CPD, they were not always supported by school leadership.
- Positive view of spiral curriculum while in Soviet system you only learned a topic once.
- 'A bit overloaded', fragmented and 'lacking depth' curriculum, which often does not correspond to students' age.
- Redefining 'literacy' (Russian language); 'This is not Russian, this is a total Geography [class]' (parents' concern).
- Textbooks have been updated but there has been questions as to the quality of these new textbooks. "big problem is the textbooks."
- Concern about distribution of subject hours across curriculum (Science subjects, Technology/ Art subjects)

4. Changes in teaching practices

- Aspiration for teachers and students to be able to seek knowledge and develop reflection on learning.
- How children should be taught is different depending on the age the of teachers. Younger teachers are more enthusiastic about changing their practices.
- Active learning; variety of tasks and activities; benefits of group work and also concerns about the effectiveness of group work; developing communication skills
- Learner autonomy; independent work, learning to find information, how to be critical users of the internet
- Students are more engaged in their learning. More opportunities for individuals to take on leadership within a group; students 'are happy' and enjoy new ways of learning
- Student-centered pedagogy is difficult to implement fully; emphasis on memorisation is still there; multiple references to Soviet education
- Preparing lessons until 3 am is a common practice.
- Beliefs learnt during CPD about teacher talk time 7-9 minutes



- A new emphasis on lesson objectives and outcomes
 - Still lots of confusion with new forms of assessment especially in grades 5 and 7
 - Hard to understand the quality of the knowledge students have obtained
 - Summative assessment is stressful, voluminous, hard to be prepared for. Teachers try to minimise stress for students. Techers spend a lot of time preparing summative assessment.
- No homework policy negatively affects student motivation; student participation in class is not takes into account in determining the term grade.
- Very difficult for parents to understand the assessment:
 - Parents were informed and trained in new forms of assessment.
 - Some parents, especially those who have older children, don't always understand even after workshops so communication takes place through the internet or faceto-face discussions.
 - Parents find it hard to help their children since they were educated using a different system of learning; some parents do not have access to computer or internet; parer in urban schools are more able to help their children especially in primary school.
- Problems with Kundelik, internet connectivity, comments are not attended to in rural schools while parents in urban school read comments in Kundelik.
- Online calculation/ averaging of the summative marks facilitates teachers' work.

6. Professional support

- Teachers still need more methodological support. They get initial training but follow-up is not always consistent and there are still many misunderstandings
- Many schools are left with no teachers while gone on training
- Certain conditions have not been met to allow for a high quality implementation
- Teachers found CPD not sufficient for shifting their pedagogy
- Differences between urban and rural schools in accessing post-CPD support; urban school actively seeking support; rural schools 'do not want to bother'
- Urban schools feel supported by regional/city educational authorities
- Within school and school-to-school networks are important;
 Lesson study groups; coaching groups
- Self-education plays an essential role as well.

7. School resources

- Rural schools are lacking the technology, infrastructure and funding to implement aspects of the reform
 - The renewed curriculum calls for resources many don't have. i.e. smartboard, computers in each class and science labs.
- Many rural schools still do not have the ability to connect to the internet.
 - 'Find information online' task in the textbook when there is no internet, students learn homework in the attic, where internet works better
- Urban schools are better equipped with internet, PCs, Ipads, laptops.
- Textbooks are more bright and vibrant, but large and heavy for primary students' backpacks.
- Teachers are using their own resources printers, printing paper, mobile phones to access internet and WhatsApp for lesson preparation.



- 10-month CPD for Science teachers; ongoing support post-CPD; seminars on CLIL methodology; visits to NIS and KTL
- Parents and students in urban school are more supportive about learning Science subjects in English.
- REA plans how many CPD course a year need to be taught; schools are assigned to teach particular Science subjects in English
- In 7^{th} and 8^{th} grades these classes are taught as optional classes; vocabulary class rather than a Science class; in 9^{th} and 10^{th} grade are taught entirely in English
- Teachers in urban school support later introduction of English (from grade 5); support cross-curricular topics in 3 languages.
- Before this policy we always studied in three languages Kazakh, Russian and English. "This is not new to us."
- In schools where teachers were trained, students can now speak all three languages 'freely'
- Yet, bilingualism is still an aspiration in rural schools; self-efficacy of experienced teachers in teaching in English post-CPD is low.
- Depending on the teacher's ability, students may be learning poor pronunciation.
- Even after courses, many teachers struggle to conduct a high quality lesson in English.
- Other aspects of reform 'develop rapidly', 'trilingual education slows down for some reason'

10. Lessons learnt

- Would have worked best if just started in first grade and made its way up year by year
- Mistake first not to also teach the headmasters. They didn't support the teachers because they weren't sure, they didn't understand or know how to.
- Reform should have started with students in teacher preparation programs
- Still too much focus on rating of individual schools so there is still a focus on competitions to improve a school's ranking
- Calls to revisit the definition of 'literacy' in Russian
- Calls for improved resources and infrastructure for rural schools
- Change is slow; it needs to be communicated.
- Role of media

REGION-E CASE STUDY: TUDENTS' AND PARENTS' PERSPECTIV

STUDENTS' AND PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES of Renewed Content of Education (RCE)

REGION-E Case study research team:

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Outline of the Region-E Case Study

- Aim of the Focus Group Activity and Discussion with Students
- Aim of the Focus Group Interview with Parents
- Population sampling for FG with Students and FG for Parents
- Parents' perspective of RCE
- Students' perspective of RCE

FOCUS GROUP ACTIVITY with STUDENTS

SAMPLING: Students G-8

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 7-10

student

PURPOSE: To gain the students'

perspective on the value of the renewed

content of education and their judgements

and reaction to the renewed content of

education

METHOD USED:

Focus group activity and discussion

FOCUS GROUP Interview with PARENTS

SAMPLING:

Parents of Grade 1-3

Parents of Grade 5-8

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 5-15

Parents

PURPOSE: To gain the parents' perspective on the value of the renewed content of education and parents' judgements of their child's reaction to the renewed content of education

METHOD USED: Structure FG Interview

SAMPLING

	District sample	School sample	Focus Group Activity with Students G-8	Focus Group Interview with Parents G 1-3	Focus Group Interview with Parents G 5-8
Region E	District-1	Urban School E-u	1 FG	1	FG
	District-2	Rural School E-r	1 FG	1 FG	1 FG
	District-3	Small School E-m	1 FG	1 FG	1 FG
TOTAL	3 districts	3 schools	3 FG	3 FG	3 FG

- Invitation to participate in the focus group was done through the school administration.
- No opportunity for researchers to control the sample to be representative of the overall students' or parents' population.
- It was identified that the focus group parent-participants were all parents of better performing children.
- No opportunity to confirm if all students were best performing students.

PARENT-PARTICIPANTS' CHARACTERISTICS

- All Female parent-participants (out of 44 parent-participants only one was a male
 –grandfather);
- Parents of best performing students and those who can afford to pay for Internet at home;
- 12 parent-participants (27%) with 1 child, 21 parents (48%) with 2 children and 11 parents (25%) with 3 -5 children attending the same school;
- 13 parents (30%) had children in primary school only; while 16 parents (36%) had their children attending primary and middle school; 15 parents (34%) had children attending middle school only;

#Children	School E-u	School E-r	School E-m	TOTAL
1 Child	4	5	3	12
2 Children	11	5	5	21
3 Children	2	1	2	5
4 Children		1	2	3
5 Children		3		3
TOTAL	17	15	12	44

SCHOOL E-u - Urban (Kazakh and Russian)

SCHOOL E-u was located at the outskirt of the city, where many of the parents rent 'dachas' to live in and commute to the city to work.

The access to Internet was reported to be limited in the area and not all parents could afford to get Internet connection.

School administration reported that most of the time children were left alone while parents were working in the city. Younger children were looked after by their older siblings.

Many students study in the school for a year or two due to changing nature of the parents' work or moving from one rented house to another.

SCHOOL E-r-Rural (Kazakh)

SCHOOL E-r has a sense of remoteness because of the poor quality of the road to reach it.

The whole area was shrouded in mist on the day of the visit which is apparently a common occurrence. This mist cuts out internet and some mobile phone access.

'To connect to the Internet, students throw their mobiles as high as possible standing at the sport where it is possible to catch the connection'

In the village they all know each other, and they all attended the same school.

Parents were more positive about the RCE and its impact on their children's future.

SCHOOL E-m-Multi Graded (Russian)

All parent-participants attended the same school that their children attend and most of the time the teachers now teaching their children have taught them sometime ago.

90% of students (parents) in the school was a representatives of minority ethnic group in Kazakhstan.

There is an understanding among parents that the renewed content of education (RCE) is needed for the betterment of an individuals and the country as a whole.

Despite this fact, they expressed concerns in relation to the quality of education provision, teacher learning and their change role, parents' role in assisting and helping their children to learn new things, continuity and coherence of the RCE and assessment system.

Parents' perspective of RCE G 1-3

Parents whose children were studying RCE for the third year were more knowledgeable about the RCE and

Better understanding by

Internet access

time and RCE experience	supportive of its impact on child's learning.
New Curriculum	The best thing of the program is that it is accessible for children. I like that children study themselves. To be honest, I do not see huge differences in learning process, homework to learn to read and write. RCE more complex and difficult for children than it was in the old programme;
Content and Coherence Crosscutting themes & Spiral learning	What I like in the new program Children have more developed logical skills. The one advantage to learn all three languages at the same time is the crosscutting themes. There is no coherence as used to be previous programme;
Teaching approach	They work in groupsafter group work they can tell their opinion . They can explain everything. Child isn't so shy and not restricted.
Textbooks and Coherence	Because textbooks are not systematic , themes in textbooks are not coherent . Information is limited in textbooks. Rules are not properly written.
Assessment (Formative assessment)	My child does everything by herself. Probably this attitude is related to the fact that there is no everyday making. This makes a child to do better. Absence of marks. I cannot help my child if I do not know the results of my child
Pace of new topics	There is no summarizing and anchoring the knowledge on this topic. Themes to learn are a lot and changes so quickly.
Trilingual education	It is good that they [children] learn English. Everybody needs English now. Introducing all three languages with Kazakh language shifting to Latin alphabet as early as in primary school. English is difficult for us. Because in our house no one has studied English, we find it hard on this side.
New Subjects	A new subject is the natural science, right? Children did not have time to learn the letters, and we [students] are already asked to tell the story about 'King of Sacs''
Child personality or RCE?	Maybe a lot more depends on a child I have a daughter in G-2. And my son is in G-4. Whether one study according to the old programme or the new programme, we do not encounter any problems.
Parents' support	Parents do not know how to support a child in study according to RCE
School Communication with Parents	Two parents from each grade. It is like that. Usually, they do not invite all the parents. Teachers call us to the meetings, organise round tables, we work in groups. Teachers make us to work in groups as they would do it with our children.

We buy Internet for our children... but it doesn't work always'

Parents' perspective of RCE G 5-8

NIS Experience transfer New Curriculum	NIS children – they make robots and other interesting projects. If our children study the same way, they will achieve the same results
	I understand that it is prestigious to say my child study according to RCE, it is not yet reflected in quality knowledge, unfortunately'
	Our culture cannot be changed so fast to accept and implement the Western education system I think, even our teachers working here psychologically not ready for the implementation.
Content and Coherence	It would be better to start [RCE] from Grade-1 and continue it. But, giving it to Grade 7 and eight and nine and in high school, it is for them hmm
Teaching approach	Both of my children. They are independent. There is support from the teacher, on the other hand, our teachers explain everything well. I understand the RCE.
Pace of new topics	I observed how teacher try RCE and explain it. But, Once the lesson is over, remaining issues remains unanswered with children'
Textbooks and Coherence	'Textbooks are just empty' The children are given a task at school, they come home look for answers in Internet, wrote off what they wrote off, without any understanding they fulfil the task. My child gets angry when computer fails him.
Assessment (Summative assessment)	Summative assessment What are they at all?". We do not know what he gets. I am not satisfied SAS and SAT, there is no marks, so you should observe the child all the time. Until SAS and SAT a child is free. Only t SAS and SAT there is some form of assessment.
Trilingual education	It is good that they [children] learn English. Everybody needs English now. Introducing all three languages with Kazakh language shifting to Latin alphabet as early as in primary school. English is difficult for us. Because in our house no one has studied English, we find it hard on this side.
Child personality or RCE?	If the child is interested , then it is easier for him to learn' Physics subject was added this year. It is taught in three languages. They became more interested. Probably, it depends on a child '
School Communication with Parents	'We just stupidly learning and moving from Grade -7 to Grade-8. I am telling it as it is, I cannot say anything to support it I talked to the lead teacher of my child. She says the new programme is like this, how to say, it is given from above, and that teachers are nothing to do with it'
Resources	Now there is a good supply of technologies and computers, each classroom has an interactive whiteboard. This is of course very good, but what about the quality of education'
Final assessment -UNT	What will be UNT like when they finish studying RCE?

Grade 8 students' focus group responses as to the most positive and negative impacts on learning in their current grade and best/worst changes from the previous year

Impact on learning	Studying now (in G8)	Change in education from G6 to G7 (old to new content of education)
Most	When teachers explain a new topic and then give tasks	We can find information that is important to us;
positive	New summative assessments	We can engage in self-guided enquiry.
	Individual work	Authentic evaluation has been introduced
		Not getting grades.
Positive	When students are enthusiastic and interested in the	Studying through group discussions.
	lesson	Freer to express one's thoughts and opinions
	Competition between students aids motivation;	5 days-a-week is easier;
	Group and pair work is effective	Having quarterly and unit tests is good
Neutral	Using electronic devices when it is too difficult; giving	Expressing our thoughts through different means;
	less homework	Introducing summative assessment instead of control work and
	Lack of coherence between topics in the textbooks;	dictation.
	Too many summative assessments in a day.	
	Education videos; presentations; games.	
Negative	Individual work;	Providing feedback instead of marking.
	Return to the old programme (curriculum)	It was less intense than now.
Most	Disorder in the classroom	Elimination of official marks
negative	When teachers give homework without explaining it.	That we have to study the topics that are more appropriate for senior
		classes.
		The new programme is harder and physically more intense because
		there are lots of textbooks to carry that are heavy.

MAPPING STUDENTS' WITH PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES

Impact	Students perspective	Parents' Perspective
Most	When teachers explain a new topic and then give tasks	[Children] are independent. There is support from the
positive	New summative assessments	teacher, on the other hand, our teachers explain
	Individual work	everything well. I understand the RCE.
	We can find information that is important to us;	
	We can engage in self-guided enquiry.	Until SAS and SAT a child is free. Only t SAS and SAT there
	Authentic evaluation has been introduced	is some form of assessment.
	Not getting grades.	
Positive	When students are enthusiastic and interested in the lesson	If the child is interested, then it is easier for him to learn'
	Competition between students aids motivation;	
	Group and pair work is effective	They work in groupsafter group work they can tell their
	Studying through group discussions.	opinion. They can explain everything. Child isn't so shy
	Freer to express one's thoughts and opinions	and not restricted.
	5 days-a-week is easier;	
	Having quarterly and unit tests is good	SAS and SAT, there is no marks
Neutral	Using electronic devices when it is too difficult;	Now there is a good supply of technologies and
	Giving less homework	computers
	Lack of coherence between topics in the textbooks;	'Textbooks are just empty'
	Too many summative assessments in a day.	The children are given a task at school, they come home
	Education videos; presentations; games.	look for answers in Internet, wrote off what they wrote
	Expressing our thoughts through different means;	off, without any understanding they fulfil the task. My
	Introducing summative assessment instead of control work and	child gets angry when computer fails him
	dictation.	
Negative	Individual work;	
	Return to the old programme (curriculum)	Absence of marks. I cannot help my child if I do not know
	Providing feedback instead of marking.	the results of my child
	It was less intense than now.	
Most	Disorder in the classroom	Once the lesson is over, remaining issues remains
negative	When teachers give homework without explaining it.	unanswered with children'
	Elimination of official marks	
	That we have to study the topics that are more appropriate for	RCE more complex and difficult for children than it was in
	senior classes.	the old programme;
	The new programme is harder and physically more intense	
	harana than an late of tenth a shade are had an haran	

THANK YOU

http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/networks/eri/