EFL Teachers' Involvement in Designing Higher Education Syllabi: Reality and Expectations
Case of EFL Teachers in Setif 2 University, Algeria

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Abstract:

The motivation underlying this research is the indisputable importance of teachers' involvement in contributing to the development of appropriate syllabi. Given that teachers interact directly with the syllabus through implementation without being involved in the design process, is likely to create a gap between expectations and reality. This study aims to clarify the actual situation of teachers' involvement in designing higher education syllabi in Algeria by revealing whether or not they participate in the syllabus design process, and if so, what is the nature of their participation. 18 Permanent EFL teachers at Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif 2 university volunteered to undertake the study by answering a questionnaire with both limited-scale and open-ended questions. Findings revealed that teachers' role in syllabus design is overlooked. Teachers are considered as mere implementers of the syllabi which come from the top. Despite this, they believe to have a voice to contribute beyond the classroom, especially that they recognize several issues in the current syllabi. Referring to teachers only at the final stages of syllabus design (i.e., implementation) may negatively impact syllabi adequacy and the overall efficacy of the educational system. Hence, the study proposed some recommendations as to make room for teachers' voice.

Keywords: Algerian universities; EFL; higher education; syllabus design; teachers' involvement

1. Introduction

In recent years, the educational system in Algeria has undergone several reforms, and reforms in higher education are no exception. The ministry of higher education and scientific research (MHESR) has made changes to syllabi for different modules. This process involves several parties, one of the most important being teachers. The importance of teachers' contribution in syllabus design is unquestionable (Oliva, 2009). Teachers' participation in such a process, according to Bolstad (2004), should be considered as a requisite step rather than a welcoming gesture to teachers.

Despite its significance, the theme of teachers' involvement in university syllabi

design has received little attention in Algerian academia.It is not evident that teachers participate in the syllabus design process. Given that the Algerian system is centralized, it is doubtful that efforts have been made to encourage their involvement at first. As noted earlier, a centralized organization can control policy, program, evaluation, finance, staff, and resources (Androniceanu & Ristea, 2014). In a decentralized system, decision-making responsibility and authority are transferred from upper to lower organizational levels (Bray, 1999).This means that in centralized systems, syllabus design is governed by a "top-down" approach in which there is no direct interaction between the designer and the classroom. The teacher is a "doer" who is accountable for executing the syllabus. While the decentralized system involves teachers in the design process prior to implementation, the centralized system does not.In Algeria, due to the hierarchical structure of the government, all decisions are set by ministries and policy-makers. Bouakba (as cited in Bellalem, 2014) claimed that the nature of the educational system is usually affected by its former colonial forces. Indeed, Algeria has inherited its system from the French colony and opted for a centralized system. Consequently, incompetence and contradiction have emerged as a result of the difference between what society truly needs and what the syllabi intend to achieve. Thus, the present study seeks to clarify the actual picture of teachers' involvement in designing syllabi by revealing their views about their role in this process. According to Messick and Reynolds (1992), teachers are the closest

individuals to students and can respond to their needs efficiently. Treating teachers as mere implementers may negatively impact the overall adequacy of the educational system because neglecting their views would lead to teachers' dissatisfaction and demotivation toward their jobs. Consequently, their practices affect the teaching/learning process as well as students' achievement.

Several questions arise in this case: how do teachers perceive the currently accredited syllabi? What are their views on their role in the syllabus design process? If teachers are dissatisfied with their current role, what would they suggest to increase opportunities for participation in syllabus design? Thus, the main objective of this study is to elicit teachers' perspectives on their role in syllabus design and future involvement. The study also seeks to bring policymakers' attention to this subject so that teachers' role in the syllabus design process will be recognized seriously.

2. LiteratureReview:

2.1. Definition of Syllabus and Syllabus Design:

Much is known from the literature on the concept of the syllabus. The latter has been defined by various scholars (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Kearsley & Lynch, 1996; Nunan, Candlin, & Widdowson, 1988; Rabbini, 2002; Yalden, 1987). Syllabus, in the current study, refers to the document that "outlines the goals and objectives of a course, prerequisites,the grading/evaluation scheme, materials to be used (textbooks, software), topics to be covered, a schedule, and a bibliography"

(Kearsley & Lynch, 1996, p. 192). Simply put, a syllabus is a set of guidelines that can be compared to a blueprint or a plan that the teacher "converts into a reality of classroom interaction" (Sabbah, 2018, p. 128). Hence, syllabus design is a multi-phase process that includes analyzing the needs of learners, setting goals and objectives, conceptualizing the content, selecting and developing materials and activities, organizing content and activities, and evaluating (Graves & Blyth, 1996). This means that after completing all these steps, implementing the syllabus is the last step in the overall syllabus design process.

2.2. The Perceptions of Teacher's Involvement:

Teachers hold two diverse perceptions of their role in the syllabus design process (Carl, 2009). Some teachers perceive their role to be restricted to the classroom where they think they can contribute something. Therefore, "beyond the classroom" is the task of policymakers. Other teachers believe they are active partners who contribute to the syllabus design process. Their role extends outside the classroom and their voices are considered before syllabus implementation. It is important to note that two institutions guide decision-making: the MHESR, which is in charge of university matters, and the Ministry of Education and Teaching, which is responsible for primary, middle, and secondary school matters. Both entities produce syllabi and require teachers to apply them. However, the case of teachers in both ministries slightly differs.

University teachers are provided with the official syllabi of modules and are given the freedom to select materials, method of teaching, and evaluation. This may seem to grant them more freedom compared to middle and high school teachers who are provided with everything in detail and are limited to following textbooks. Nevertheless, university teachers continue to play a passive role, since they prepare their lessons according to the norms established by authorized entities. In general, teachers' perceptions appear to be influenced by the nature of the educational system and the extent to which this system considers their involvement as crucial.

2.3. Importance of Teachers' Involvement in Syllabus Design

Studies have overlooked the significance of teachers' involvement in syllabus design. Much focus has been paid to aspects like learners' needs, materials development, the design process... etc. Young (1988) has argued that teachers' classroom encounters have a substantial effect on the nature of their involvement in syllabus design. This implies that teachers' involvement is vital to syllabus development. Because they are in direct contact with learners, teachers are aware of students' needs, learning styles, attitudes, and appropriate assessment practices. Teachers can notice learners' deficiencies as well as required transformations. Therefore, allowing for teachers' engagement in syllabus design can positively influence the creation and implementation of syllabi. This is essential because of the factor of "making or breaking" teachers generally maintain. If teachers are not directed to "making"

syllabi, they will likely fall in the other direction of "breaking" the possibility of successful syllabus implementation (Kelly, 2009).

2.4.   The Teacher as a Syllabus Designer

Nowadays, teachers' role has more multiplicity than before. Unfortunately, the role of teachers in Algeria appears to be recalled only at the end of the syllabus development phases, namely implementation. For effective syllabus creation, the teacher must actively participate in all stages of the syllabus design (Bolstad, 2004). However, teachers must be empowered in order to be eligible to participate in syllabus design (Carl, 2009). This necessitates teachers to upgrade their thoughts and become autonomously professional. In the Algerian context, teachers are expected to undergo a pre-service teacher training program before enrolling in their actual classroom jobs. Nonetheless, the training sessions' efficacy has been doubted. For example, Ghedjghoudj (2012) has considered teacher training as a fundamental problem in the Algerian educational system. He explains that "the emphasis in teacher education has been on a disciplinary, or subject matter, basis rather than on professional training" (p. 139). Put differently, teacher training is more theoretical than practical. Hence, these training programs minimize teachers 'chances of professional development. This may raise the question of whether Algerian teachers are eligible to engage in the syllabus design creation in the first place.

It is worth noting that teacher's participation in this study means that he/she has opinions to express either locally or nationally through being a member of the syllabus design committees or through providing reports and evaluations. The teacher here has a role beyond the classroom that may lead to changes at the level of the syllabus. Overall, teachers' input into syllabus design is essential for multiple reasons. This is why this topic needs further attention. In fact, this is a gap that, if properly investigated, would positively impact the quality of produced syllabi as well as students' learning outcomes.

3. Research Methodology:
3.1.   Research Design:

This study falls within the exploratory research design. Robson (2002) has defined exploratory research as a means to discover "what is happening" and "to seek new insights" (p.59). Therefore, the study aims to evoke teachers' perspectives on their role in designing higher education syllabi and to emphasize the significance of such a role.

3.2.   Population and Sample:

The research community consists of permanent EFL teachers from the department of English language and literature at Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif 2 University. The decision is based on the premise that they are acquainted with the currently accredited syllabi and therefore could provide informed viewpoints. The sample size was subject to the number of teachers who volunteered in

the study. Thus, eighteen (18) teachers formed the sample.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures:

Due to the Covid-19 virus, the study could only be conducted using a Google forms questionnaire. Teachers were emailed a link to the questionnaire on the 25th of June, 2020. It comprises two main parts. Part one covers the background information of participants in addition to other essential elements. Part two is divided into four sections namely: (1) Syllabus Design Issues, (2) Considering Teachers' Views on Syllabus Design, (3) Suggestions to Enhance Teachers' Participation in Syllabus Design, and (4) Open-ended Questions. For the three sections in part two, both yes/ no and open-ended questions are raised. The questionnaire was piloted by four university teachers to ensure that the content was valid. Changes were made in accordance with the recommendations.

The questionnaire allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were analyzed by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software program (Version 26). The analyses made use of descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages). For qualitative data, themes and patterns were identified.

4. Results:

Table 1: Participants' Background Information

Description		Freq	%
1. Participants' Gender	Male.	7	38.9
	Female.	11	61.1
2. English Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years.	3	16.7
	5 - 10 years.	6	33.3
	10 – 15 years.	5	27.8
	More than 15 years.	4	22.2
3. Do you have a copy or an E-version of the accredited syllabus regarding the module(s) you teach?	Yes.	11	61.1
	No.	7	38.9
4. Following an Accredited Syllabus	Yes.	9	50
	No.	9	50
4.1. If Yes, how often do you make use of it?	Very Frequently.	0	0
	Frequently.	3	33.3
	Occasionally.	2	22.2
	Rarely.	2	22.2
	Very Rarely.	2	22.2
4.2. If No, what do you follow instead?.	Devise your own	3	33.3

	lessons.		55.5
	Resort to internet sources.	5	11.1
	Adapt a book as the main reference.	1	
	Others.	0	0

The majority of teachers 33.3% had 5-10 years of experience in teaching English. 27.8% have 10-15 years of experience. While 22.2% have taught for more than 15 years. Only 3 teachers (16.7%) had less than 5 years of teaching experience. This is particularly important because most respondents were experienced teachers who could give an informed view. However, only 11 (61.1%) teachers claimed to have a copy of the accredited syllabi they teach. Of the respondents, 44.4% claimed that they rarely and very rarely use the accredited syllabus, 33.3% claimed to use it frequently, and 22.2% claimed to use it occasionally. Surprisingly, the rest of them claimed not to have a copy of the syllabi. Instead, they resort to internet sources (55.5%), design their own lessons (33.3%), or adapt a book as the main reference (11.1%). This implies that teachers often do not depend on the accredited syllabi as a valuable reference, but rather have alternatives for planning their lessons.

Section One: Syllabus Design Issues:

Table 2: Current Syllabi Evaluation

Description		Freq	%
5. How do you evaluate the currently accredited Syllabus (i)?	It is practical.	1	5.6
	It needs modifications.	15	83.3
	It needs complete reform.		
		2	11.1
6. Do you think the current syllabi are easy to implement?	Yes.	6	33.3
	No.	12	66.6
7. Do you think the current syllabi are efficient in helping students meet the target objectives?	Yes.	6	33.3
	No.	12	66.6

	Teachers' views and ideas.	4	22.2
	Learners needs.	8	44.4
	Environmental factors (availability of - classrooms, availability of teachers in specific fields, ...etc.).	1	5.6
8. From your view, what is the first factor that should be considered in designing syllabi?	Economic factors (budget, materials)	2	11.1
	The demands of society (job-opportunities, labor market).	3	16.6
	Others (specify).		
		0	0

Most teachers (83.3%) believed that the currently accredited syllabi need adjustments, while 11.1% said that they need to be fully reformed and only one teacher (5.6%) found the syllabi practical. When it comes to implementing syllabi, the majority of teachers (66.6%) disagreed that current syllabi are easy to implement, whereas only 6 teachers (33.3%) believed the opposite.Of the respondents, 66.6% have also agreed that the current syllabi are ineffective in helping students achieve their target objectives. Only 6 teachers have claimed to perceive them as effective. When teachers were asked to arrange some factors related to syllabus design on a priority basis, the order was as follows: learners' needs (44,4%), teachers' views and ideas (22.2%), The demands of society (job-opportunities, labor market) (16.6%), and Economical factors (budget, materials) with (11.1%), and Environmental factors (availability of classrooms, availability of teachers in specific fields, etc.) with (5.6%).These findings support the previous ones that teachers do not take existing syllabi seriously.

Section Two: Teachers' Views in Syllabus Design:

Table 3: Teachers' Views in Syllabus Design

Description		Freq	%
9. Do you think the role of teachers in syllabus design is important?	Yes.	18	100
	No.	0	0
9.1.If yes, to what extent is this role important?	To a very great extent.	11	61.1
	To a large extent.		33.3
	To some extent.	6	
		1	5.6

10. Do you think the process of syllabus design in Algeria completely excludes teachers?	Yes. No.	13 5	72.2 27.8
11. Have you ever participated in a syllabus design operation?	Yes. No.	7 11	38.9 61.1
11.1. If yes, have your participation and contribution been taken into account in developing the syllabus?	Yes. No. Not Sure.	3 3 1	42.8 42.8 14.3
12. Would you welcome an opportunity to participate in a syllabus design?	Yes. No.	17 1	94.4 5.6
13. Do you prefer to participate...?	At the local level. At the national level. Both.	5 1 12	27.7 5.6 66.7

All respondents (100%) stated that teachers' role in program design is important. While 61.1% claimed it is important to a very great extent, 33.33% claimed it was important to a large extent. Only one teacher (5.6%) indicated it is important to some extent.Remarkably, the overwhelming majority of teachers (72.2%) felt that the Algerian syllabus design process totally excluded them, whereas 27.8% said the contrary.This implies that teachers believe that their involvement in syllabus design is overlooked.

When asked about participating in syllabus design experience before, most teachers (61.1%) said no, while (38.9%) said yes. Those who answered yes assumed that their participation was considered (42.8%), their participation was not considered (42.8%), and they were not sure whether or not their participation had been considered (14.3%).This again reveals how ambiguous the process is for teachers to the point that even those who participated in designing the syllabi were not sure that their participation was taken into account.

When asked about their attitudes toward future participation in syllabus design, the vast majority of teachers (94.4%) claimed that they would welcome the opportunity to participate in the curriculum design. While only one participant (5.6%) showed an unwillingness to do so. Of the respondents, 66.7% indicated their interest to participate at the local and national levels, 27.7% said that they would prefer to participate at the local level only, and one teacher (5.6%) said that he/she prefers to participate at the national level only. These results are significant because they indicate that teachers are enthusiastic and confident about having a role in syllabus design. This entails that teachers are

confident about having constructive feedback regarding the syllabi they teach currently.

Section Three: Suggestions to Enhance Teachers' Participation in Syllabus Design:

Table 4: Teachers' Views of Receiving Training and a Syllabus Design Leader

Description		Freq	%
14. Have you ever received training on syllabus design?	Yes.	5	27.8
	No.	13	72.2
15. Do you think training is necessary?	Yes.	17	94.4
	No.	1	5.6
16. Do you have a syllabus design leader in your institution?	Yes.	2	11.1
	No.	16	88.9
17. Do you think it is necessary to have such a person in your institution?	Yes.	15	83.3
	No.	3	16.7

Most teachers (72.2%) claimed that they have not received any training regarding syllabus design. while 27.8% claimed to have received training. Almost all teachers (94.4%) agreed that it is necessary to have such training. Whereas only one teacher (5.6%) had an opposing viewpoint. In the same direction, 88.9% of respondents reported that they do not have a syllabus design leader in their institutions while only 11.1% claimed to have such a leader. The majority of them (83.8%) think that it is necessary to have a leader in their institutions.

Section 4: The Open-ended Question:

18. **What do you dislike concerning the currently accredited syllabi?**

Four major answerswere obtained from teachers' responses. They are arranged in order of recurrence.

● The nature of the syllabi: syllabi are abstract in nature; with little real-life relationship since they are not aligned with labor market demands. Moreover, the current syllabi do not aim to develop the real-life skills required in the 21st century.

● Learners' needs consideration: They do not take learners' needs into account when designing syllabi, rather, they foster teachers' dominance inside the classroom.

● Outdatedness: teachers believe the existing syllabi are outdated and leave little space for innovation. This goes hand in hand with the first factor because the outdated syllabi could not be useful in preparing students for real-life situations.

• The length of the syllabi: teachers believe that the current syllabi are lengthy and contain some irrelevant content.

19. Do you think the strategy implemented in Algeria to design syllabi is efficient?

Most of the answers were "no". Some teachers have justified their answer, stating that those who design the syllabi are not experts. Others believe the programs are more theoretical rather than practical. Only two responses identified the strategy as somewhat appropriate.

20. Who do you think is responsible (s) for designing university Syllabi in Algeria?

Emerging themes are:

• The ministry.

• Experts and professors in the field or specialty but not in syllabus design.

• They do not know.

From the themes above, Teachers in Algeria are unsure who is in charge of syllabus design. This is reflected in their broad and imprecise responses. This indicates that the process of syllabus design is vague and primarily regulated by higher authorities.

21. Why do you think teachers' views are not considered in the syllabus design process?

Three answers were identified

• No idea: respondents are unsure why.

• Perception of teachers' role: teachers think that the MHESR perceives their role as being mere syllabi implementers. The

following comment of a respondent exemplifies this viewpoint:

"syllabi are imposed on teachers and this is due to the centralization of the educational system."

• A Lack of regular evaluations: teachers think that those who design syllabi believe in the adequacy of their work. They contend that the situation in classrooms is not more closely examined. Teachers suggested that if the existing syllabi are evaluated regularly, the evolving issues would call for teachers' involvement to identify suitable solutions.

22. What are the benefits of taking teachers' views into account when designing syllabi?

All respondents agreed on the fact that teachers know better when it comes to their students and the classroom milieu. Among the claims is the following:

"Teachers know best. They are doing the hardest job in the front. The views of teachers -even silly views- must be valued and respected in the course of designing syllabi or making reforms".

Another teacher explained that:

"The teacher is the most knowledgeable person as he knows the weaknesses and the strengths as he is in direct contact with the syllabus and its realization in the classroom hand in hand with students' levels and needs"

Therefore, syllabi built on teachers' perspectives are more likely to be realistic and time-bound. On the one hand, the defined syllabus would match learners'

needs and interests. On the other hand, instructor's insights on learning and teaching in a given situation will be taken into consideration.

23. **If a syllabus design leader is to be appointed, what will his/her job be?**

The following responses were identified:

● Coordination: The leader coordinates teachers and students and listens to their perceptions and opinions.

● Supervision: The Leader guides teachers, organizes workshops, and provides advice on syllabus development and implementation.

● Representativeness: reports teachers' and students' concerns on the actual situation to the higher authorities.

One of the key points highlighted here is that this leader needs to operate in a team otherwise his role would not be effective. One teacher clarified this idea saying that the leader should be:

"Qualified enough and have experience in syllabus design. select a team for identifying needs and lacks, another team for means analysis and finally, data gathered have to be analysed in order to be able to design a skeleton for the course intended"

Another teacher emphasized saying:

"I said yes because I understand that you mean a leader with a team. Without a team, I do not accept a leader."

24. **Overall, what do you suggest to improve teachers' participation in the syllabus design?**

Identified responses are as follows:

● The ministry's decision: teachers think that the MHESR should set a plan to listen to teachers' views and concerns. One respondent claimed that:

"It is a political decision".

● Teacher training: training teachers to be syllabus designers by equipping them with the requisite knowledge to be able to provide informed viewpoints.

● Meeting sessions: the teachers suggested that there should be regular meetings with those responsible for designing the syllabus to hear their opinions.

The teachers have proposed several solutions for enabling their participation in the design of syllabi. However, these proposals appear largely dependent on the ministry's decision. Teachers agree that if anything is needed to address their position in syllabus design, the MHES should be the initiator.

5. Discussion:

The problem posed in this paper is the situation and the scope of university teachers' involvement in the design of higher education syllabi in Algeria. A literature review on this subject in the Algerian context revealed a lack of investigation in this area. The main findings indicate that teachers are not invited to design syllabi in the first place. In other words, teachers are treated as mere implementers of the syllabi. This is consistent with Bellalem's (2014) findings, which showed that teachers' opinions were

not a major concern before the introduction of Algerian syllabus reforms. Schwarz and Alberts (1998) have emphasized this point, claiming that "indeed the voices of teachers have remained largely absent from reform moves" (p.161).

a) Dissatisfaction of teachers with their current status in the syllabus design process

In this study, teachers appear to be unsatisfied with their present situation. In fact, they believe that they can make a difference in improving the existing syllabi. Teachers' participation is at the core of successful syllabus design. Hence, opportunities must be created to increase their participation (Carl, 2009). If syllabi are created excluding teachers' views, the educational system including teachers and students may experience several problems. The latter may include (1) failure to meet defined goals and objectives. (2) A mismatch between the objectives and methods of evaluation. (3) Poor performance for learners, as they focus mainly on grades rather than learning. (4) A lengthy syllabus kills learners' creativity and results in less knowledgeable and incompetent individuals. (5) Students are deprived of the opportunity to adequately practice what they have learned because teachers are required to complete the syllabus on time. And (6) imposing syllabus implementation on teachers may demotivate them and decrease their teaching quality.

b) The teachers believe to have an influence on the current syllabi that encompass several noticeable shortcomings.

Teachers have noticed a number of shortcomings with some current syllabi. Consequently, they regard them as unreliable sources of information. According to Sinclair (2014), "a good syllabus is (a) is flexible; (b) is community-centered; (c) is life-centered . . . (s) integrates the needs of the individual learner and its activities and also integrates social needs with individual needs" (p.152). This implies that for a syllabus to be effective, it has to be built based on learners' needs and connected to societal and labor market demands. In addition to being "clear, understandable, and well-organized", a good syllabus according to Nehring (2009), "is useful to the professors as well because it helps them think through how best to organize the course content" (p.53). Simply put, a good syllabus satisfies both teachers' and learner's expectations and makes teaching/learning a seamless experience.

c) The correlation between teachers' involvement in syllabus design and their professional growth

Teachers' involvement in the syllabi design phase could be a more realistic step in the teacher growth process. Gerber (2003) has explained that when teachers are involved in the syllabus design process, they exchange ideas with stakeholders and experts in the area. These discussions enable them to build expertise and knowledge of the field which they may not acquire at any other form of meetings. This means that engaging teachers in such a process will gradually help them develop

wider perspectives which will contribute to the nature and quality of their future participation. Nonetheless, the selected teachers for syllabus design should at least enjoy certain basic criteria given the cruciality of the process.

Teachers' involvement in syllabi design in centralized educational systems is generally acknowledged to be minimal. Thereby, this study does not call for a decentralized system, nor does it support a centralized one. This research instead attempts to find ways through which teachers can articulate their voices independently of the system's nature.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations:

This study aimed to determine if Algerian instructors engage in the syllabus design process in higher education and, if so, to what extent their involvement is considered. This exploration concluded that the role of teachers in syllabus design has often been neglected and limited to implementation only. Consequently, essential changes that teachers may propose and believe are appropriate based on their expertise cannot be implemented in existing syllabi.The study lists below some suggestions to policymakers to open room for teachers not only to express their opinions but also to consider them at the early stages of the syllabus design process:

● **Training and practice:** teachers should be well trained through workshops, seminars, conferences, scholarly leaves. Also, they should be allowed to practice what they have learned from these experiences under professional guidance in

either real syllabusdesign or simulation processes.

● **Clarity of the process:** the MHESR should announce the start and end dates of the process, along with other important information such as modules subject to modifications, committee members, etc. Also, changes at the level of committees have to be declared so that teachers can apply to join design committees.

● **Establishing national and regional committees:** this facilitates teachers' involvement when reforms occur. Their views can be conveyed from the regional committees to the national committees and then to the ministry.

● **Syllabus design leader:** It is suggested that a teacher leader be appointed in each institution to ensure greater organization and smooth flow in the process of gathering teachers' views. By working in a team, the leader's responsibilities include supporting the university community and helping teachers provide a detailed definition of what students are expected to achieve (Wiles, 2008). The leader also transforms teachers' and students' concerns into higher committees.

● **Periodic renewal of committees' members:** It is expected that the members who make up the committee are expert teachers with specific qualifications. Regular renewal of the members ensures the freshness of the ideas and keeps the syllabus from getting outdated.

● **Regular evaluations and reforms:** the MHESR is recommended to set a specific timeline for reforms. The existing syllabi should be constantly reviewed and

updated to satisfy the changing demands of both society and the world. Specifying a period, for example, every five years, the current syllabi have to be evaluated for effectiveness check. Therefore, teachers' opinions will be needed for their experiences with existing syllabi.

- **Utilizing Internet and Communication Technologies (ICTs):** it is suggested that each university provides an online platform where teachers of the same specialism will find their syllabi with space for modification and discussion with the rest of their colleagues and the leader. When the MHESR seeks reform, these platforms are supposed to be rich in teachers' opinions.

- **Reconsidering teachers' workload:** given the complex nature and importance of syllabus design, it is necessary to reconsider the workload of qualified teachers for this mission particularly the workload of teachers forming design committees. Teachers with a heavy workload are overwhelmingly preoccupied with other tasks.

Finally, it should be noted that unless the MHESR takes action on this issue, teachers' involvement in syllabi design will remain words on paper.

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